

Hafa Adai!

Drug Court grad accused of drug trafficking is acquitted. **PAGE 2**

Legislature's OK sought in proposed NMI Rules of Guardianship Procedure. **PAGE 3**

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\$1



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OFF TO THEIR FUR-FAMILIES

A total of 39 boonie dogs were flown from Saipan to adoptive families in the United States on Monday in an effort to reduce the stray animal population in the CNMI. Front row, left to right: Noah Lewis, Boonie Babies founders and sisters Aria Keilbach and Grace Keilbach, Boonie Flight Project co-founder Lauren Cabrera, and volunteer Anya Lewis. Back row, left to right: Volunteers Victoria Sewell, Sarah Bergman-Lewis, Steve Lewis, Nicky Nichols, Dr. Nelson Krum, Donna Krum, and TJ Hill. The boonie dogs were flown via the Micronesia Air Cargo Services on Saipan to Guam, then off to adoptive families in the United States via Lisa Schoppa-Meador Animal Travel Agent.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/QUINN BREADY

'Our voices are not being heard'

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The torturously sluggish pace that has continuously plagued the CNMI Board of Nursing for many years now appears to remain unre-

solved, this time affecting former Registered Nurses in the CNMI who are trying to obtain the necessary documents processed so they could continue their nursing careers overseas.

For many years now, nurses who have worked in the CNMI have raised concerns about

the CNMI Board of Nursing's tendency to drag its feet when it comes to providing

See **NURSES** on Page 4

Dive operators: When we lose business, CNMI loses revenue

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Some dive industry operators are disheartened by the

cost-cutting measure taken by the Department of Lands and Natural Resources that would shut down the Grotto an hour

See **GROTTO** on Page 4

'When does this stop?'

By **MARYCLAIRE DALE**
Associated Press

In a country with more guns than people—and one emerging from three years of isolation, stress and infighting

amid the pandemic—Americans are beginning 2023 with a steady barrage of mass slaughter.

Eleven people killed as they welcomed the Lunar New

Year at a dance hall popular with older Asian Americans. A teen mother and her baby shot in the head in an attack that killed five generations. A 6-year-old shooting his first-grade teacher in the classroom. The list goes on.

See **BLOODY** on Page 4

Probe on expenditure of other funds being mulled

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the financial mess allegedly left behind by the previous Torres administration, Sen. Celina R. Babauta

(D-Saipan) disclosed yesterday that she will be looking into the expenditures of other funds the CNMI received from external sources.

"I know exactly how and where

See **PROBE** on Page 4



Babauta

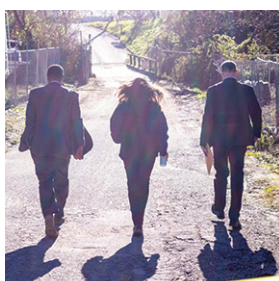
INSIDE



BUSINESS

With egg prices more than doubling in the past year, calls are coming for an investigation.

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NATION

An agricultural worker killed seven people in back-to-back shootings at mushroom farms.

PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE

The indie hit "Everything Everywhere All at Once" led nominations to the 95th Academy Awards.

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Local

Drug Court grad accused of drug trafficking is acquitted

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A former Drug Court graduate who was accused of drug possession and trafficking was acquitted of all charges by a six-person jury after an hour-long deliberation.

A six-person jury consisting of both men and women found Joseph T. White not guilty of both charges of drug trafficking charges that he was tried within the span of a two-day trial.

During Tuesday's closing arguments, the defense counsel for White, assistant public defender Tyler Scott, poked so many holes in the testimonies and evidences that the prosecution brought up in court that he eventually managed to stir reasonable doubt among the jurors.

Scott argued that, among the nine Drug Enforcement Task Force agents involved in the two buy-walk operations conducted against White back in July 2022, not one officer actually saw White selling the drugs to the task force's confidential informant.



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Joseph T. White, center, a former Drug Court graduate, walks out of the courtroom at the Guma Hustisia after being acquitted of two charges of drug trafficking following a two-day jury trial.

In addition, the defense argued that the car involved was not even White's and the prosecution is basing its arguments on recordings and testimony from what the defense claims is not a credible source.

The defense stated that the government's star witness, the confidential source, has lied throughout her testimony and even admitted to using drugs, which could've altered her thought process.

"She's admitted to being a drug user, been using drugs every day despite her agreement with the task force. Think perhaps that could've caused her to have some memory problems? But we're expected to believe her testimony beyond a reasonable doubt. But she lies," Scott said.

Following the closing arguments, the jury was dismissed to deliberate; roughly an hour later, they returned with a verdict acquitting White of both counts of trafficking of a controlled substance.

According to Saipan Tribune archives, White, also known as "Dimps," one of the CNMI's first Drug Court graduates, was arrested back in August 2022 on two counts of possession and two counts of trafficking crystal methamphetamine, more commonly known as "ice." The charges were later modified to reflect just two counts of trafficking of a controlled substance.

According to court documents, task force officers learned from a cooperating source last July 12, 2022 that they had purchased \$100 worth of "ice" from White on July 11, 2022.

Based on this information, task force officers launched two controlled buy-walk operations against White, the first one on July 13, 2022 and the second one on July 14, 2022.

According to the police, the first buy-walk operation resulted in the cooperating source buying drugs from White in Garapan in the afternoon of that day. Task force officers acquired one small Ziplock baggie containing a crystalline substance that was later tested and yielded presumptive positive for methamphetamine.

The second buy-walk operation was conducted the next

day, July 14 and like the previous operation, the confidential source purchased \$100 worth of methamphetamine from White, but this time at Friendly Market in San Jose.

After the operation, task force officers showed the confidential source a photo of White who confirmed for officers that he was "Dimps," the man they had just purchased the drugs from.

Legislature's OK sought in proposed NMI Rules of Guardianship Procedure

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro has sought the Legislature's approval of the Judiciary's proposed Northern Mariana Islands Rules of Guardianship Procedure.

Castro said the proposed rules provide the procedures governing appointment of guardians for minors and persons whose interests require guardianship due to insanity or incompetence.

The chief justice submitted the proposed rules to Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) last Monday. The Senate and House received it last Tuesday.

The proposed Northern Mariana Islands Rules of Guardianship Procedures will

become effective 60 days after submission to the Legislature, unless disapproved by a majority of the members of either Senate or House.

Castro said the guardianship procedure was previously addressed in the Northern Mariana Islands Rules of Probate Procedure, but delineating guardianship in a standalone set of rules will assist families, attorneys, and pro se litigants in understanding and acting upon their rights and obligations in this area of law.

Pro se litigants refer to parties representing themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney.

The chief justice said members of the CNMI Bar Association and the Judiciary's Family Court Division had the opportunity to comment and propose recommendations to these rules before finalization by the CNMI Supreme Court.

62 students enrolled in NMTEch's spring sem

By **LEIGH GASES**
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
Reporter

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute's spring 2023 semester, which began last Jan. 17, has 62 enrollees for its seven trades courses—48 are new students and 12 are returning students.

To add to the list of courses in the spring semester is the expansion of its Culinary Arts program, which now offers Culinary Arts II.

"This is where the students will learn more about cooking techniques, be exposed to new recipes, and develop more understanding of the food industry," said Ben Babauta, NMTEch marketing and outreach coordinator.

The Welding Level 1 course is the most sought-after class this semester with 14 students and four students enrolled in the Welding Level 2 course.

In Carpentry Level 1, there are five students; Electrical Level 1 has 12 students; Electrical Level 2 has four students; Electrical Level 4 has four students; Automotive

Technology has eight students; and Culinary Arts Level 1 has 12 students, while Culinary Arts Level 2 has five students.

Most courses will be completed by July 2023, while Welding has a longer time frame, with its cycle ending in October, which is a nine- to 10-month course.

NMTEch also launched its Trading Up Program in partnership with the CNMI Public School System, which is a dual enrollment program designed for middle and high school students who are able to receive both PSS-school credit hours and a certification from NMTEch upon completion.

"Students take the courses during school hours. Once the course is completed, they will take the exam, and if they pass the exam, they will receive a certification from either [National Center for Construction Education and Research] for construction, or [American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute] for hospitality," said Babauta.

According to Babauta, the Trading Up Program con-

sists of students from Tana-pag Middle School taking CORE—a prerequisite for any construction-related course at NMTEch—and Da'ok Academy students who are enrolled in Construction Craft Laborer I course.

All construction programs are accredited by the NCCER and certifications obtained are nationally recognized.

For Hotel & Restaurant, Marianas High School, Kagman High School and Saipan Southern High School students are taking part in Trading Up: Hospitality courses. The Hospitality course is an AHLEI certification, which is recognized globally.

In-house scholarships are available for Construction Courses. Other scholarships such as CNMI Scholarship, SHEFA, and WIOA are accepted.

Check out their website at www.nmtechcnmi.org for more information, call (670) 235-6684, or visit their NMTEch campus at Lower Base to learn more about how to enroll.



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Yumul reintroduces SOCA bill

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) has re-introduced a bill that he had introduced in the previous 22nd Legislature, which establishes the process for the delivery of a governor's State of the Commonwealth Address.

Yumul stated in his legislation, House Bill 23-4, that given the competing interests and the absence of a formalized process to schedule a SOCA, particularly a live SOCA, clear legislation is needed to set out some of the basic steps in scheduling the annual delivery of a SOCA to the Legislature.

In order to address this need to establish a straightforward process for scheduling a SOCA in place of traditional methods that can be inconsistently applied, he said his legislation creates a statutory, yet flexible, process for scheduling the annual delivery of a SOCA, particularly when the SOCA is delivered live.

Under the bill, the governor shall deliver an annual SOCA to the Legislature no later than March of any calendar year, and may present the SOCA live, recorded, or in writing.

A written or recorded SOCA shall be transmitted by the governor to the Senate president and speaker of the House of Representatives for delivery to legislative members.

Prior to any live SOCA, the governor shall give written notice of a proposed date and

time to both the Senate president and House speaker no

later than 45 days prior to the proposed date in order for the Legislature to consider a joint resolution setting out the time

and place for the SOCA.

If such a resolution fails to pass in both houses of the Legislature, the governor shall

submit only a written or recorded SOCA.

Last Nov. 30, the House passed similar legislation,

House Bill 22-119, that Yumul introduced and was co-sponsored by House majority members.

Emergency water service interruptions

There will be a scheduled emergency water service interruption for the areas of Airport Road Dandan, Lower Dandan, portions of Kannat Tabla, As Perdido, As Lito and Koblerville (from the St. Jude Catholic Church to the ABCD Market in Koblerville and Tottotville) on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2023, from 8am to 5pm. Customers will experience low water pressure to no water during the outage period.

This is required to complete improvements in connection with the Isley Booster 2 Upgrade Project and for CUC water operators to repair a transmission line leak on Exploring Drive in Airport Road Dandan. Customers should expect normal water service soon after.

For the safety of the men and women working at the repair site, motorists are advised to proceed with caution, as a portion of the road will be closed for the repairs.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. (PR)

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NMC, UOG Press to launch Proa Publications

Northern Marianas College, together with the University of Guam Press, will announce the official launch of their newly established imprint, Proa Publications, and its first book, *A Marianas Mosaic: Signs and Shifts in Contemporary Island Life*, this coming Feb. 3, 2023, at the NMI Museum.

Proa Publications was established in February 2022 through a memorandum of understanding between the University of Guam Press and NMC. Proa Publications illustrates publishing opportunities throughout the region by expanding accessibility and knowledge about Micronesia through high-quality

publications.

The book was edited by Ajani Burrell with Kimberly Bunts-Anderson, who are both faculty members at NMC. The collection explores the many modes, forms, and voices of life in the Marianas today.

The book features 13 contributors from the CNMI and

Guam. Marianas Mosaic was produced with support from the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, which views the publication as an opportunity to amplify the voices and stories of the Mariana Islands.

The public is invited to attend the “Meet the Authors” event and book signing at the

Joeten-Kiyu Public Library on Saipan on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023, from 10am to 12pm. The event is hosted by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

Pre-orders for *A Marianas Mosaic* are available now for

a special launch price of \$35 at uogpress.com, and sales in all local bookstores will begin after the launch.

For more information, contact Via De Fant at defantv@triton.uog.edu or (671) 735-2153. (NMC)

BLOODY

From page 1

“We’ve been through so much in these past few years, and to continue to see case after case of mass violence in the media is just overwhelming,” said Apryl Alexander, an associate professor of public health at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. “When does this stop?”

The carnage over eight days in California, where the dance hall victims Saturday night were among two dozen people killed in three recent attacks,

brought painful reminders to families of last year’s school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. On Tuesday, several Uvalde families and parents traveled more than three hours to their state’s Capitol to renew calls for tighter gun laws, even if they have little chance of winning over the Republican-controlled Legislature.

In 2022, the United States marked its first deadly gun rampage of the year on Jan. 23—a year ago Monday. By that same date this year, six mass killings have claimed 39 lives, according to a database of mass killings maintained by The Asso-

ciated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

“People are dying every day. This shouldn’t be happening,” said Veronica Mata, whose 10-year-old daughter Tess was among the 19 children and two teachers slain in Uvalde. “If it takes us coming every week, then we are going to do it until we see something change.”

Americans have come to endure mass shootings in churches and grocery stores, at concerts and office parks, and inside the homes of friends and neighbors. The violence is blamed on hatred toward oth-

er communities, grievances within a group, secrets within families and bitterness among colleagues. But it often ends when a man with a grudge grabs a gun.

Sometimes, it’s not clear whether a grudge is even part of the equation.

“There was no apparent conflict between the parties. The male just walked in and started shooting,” Yakima Police Chief Matt Murray said after three people were shot dead at a Circle K convenience store in Washington state early Tuesday, adding to the national grief.

PROBE

From page 1

to look into next because the people have a right to know,” said Babauta, without elaborating.

Babauta chairs the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law, whose House of Representatives counterpart she also used to chair. She also chairs the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations.

In response to *Saipan Tribune’s* inquiry, the senator said she has no plans at this time for her committee to continue the oversight investi-

gation into the Torres’ administration’s Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, or BOOST Program.

She said they have already provided all 4,000 pages of BOOST-related documents received from their committee subpoenas to the Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Auditor, and appropriate law enforcement authorities.

“I hope that they are investigating it further,” Babauta said.

The previous House of Representatives’ Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee and the Ways and Means Committee that was chaired at the time by then-Rep. Donald M. Manglona

(Ind-Rota) conducted an oversight investigation into the BOOST Program. Both Babauta and Manglona are now senators.

Manglona chairs the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs and Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare.

The 22nd joint House JGO and Ways and Means committees had recommended that further legislative investigation into the BOOST Program is needed, and should continue in the 23rd Legislature.

Babauta said yesterday that the new House JGO chair, Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan), can and has the support to pick up the investigation if she chooses to do so

and that is her prerogative.

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) said yesterday that both Babauta and Manglona are at liberty to decide if they wish to further conduct a joint committee investigation regarding the BOOST program.

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) recently disclosed that he is looking at possibly creating a special committee to focus on the BOOST program, should an investigation need to be carried out further.

Villagomez, however, stated that the investigation does not necessarily have to start from the House anymore; it can start in the Senate.

GROTTO

From page 1

earlier, as this means lesser revenue for the already struggling industry.

DLNR announced last week that the Grotto will only be open from 8am to 4pm due to budgetary constraints; it was previously open from 8am to 5pm. Although the one-hour cut doesn’t seem like much to the non-diving community, it’s a different matter for dive operators, who insist that an hour makes a big difference when it comes to dive packages being sold.

According to Jay Wolfe, Axe Murderer Tours owner, all dive agencies operate on a certain schedule and that schedule has been developed long before the cutback, since the schedule also takes into account the boat’s schedule.

With this cut back in hours with no prior warning, dive operators like Axe Murderer Tours, which sells a two-dive

package for either morning or afternoon, loses out on all its afternoon packages as 1pm to 4pm is not enough time to safely make it.

“Before, usually our schedule will be in the morning, 8am to 12pm, then break for lunch to switch equipment, and then in the afternoon [from] 1pm to 5pm. That’s the amount of time we need to do two dives, which is typically what we sell as a package, a two-dive afternoon or a two-dive morning. And this is why they need to talk to the dive industry. Talk to us before making changes because that is the amount of time we need in order to dive safely. Grotto is a deep site and we need time in between dives. Now, we’ve been booking people based on the idea that Grotto will be open until 5pm and then all of a sudden we find out that Grotto will only be open until 4pm. Now we have to change all of our afternoon schedules because there is no way we will be able

to get in two dives from 1pm to 4pm,” he said.

Because of this, Wolfe said, not only are dive operators losing out on revenue they could’ve made, but the government also loses the taxes they could’ve collected from these dives.

“From our perspective, it’s kind of a self-defeating thing because if we can’t do these dives, we don’t make money. And if we don’t make money, we can’t pay taxes to the government so the government is actually losing money by closing the Grotto early instead of saving money,” he said.

Ultimately, Wolfe said, he hopes that the government can sit down with dive operators to discuss a viable cost-cutting solution that doesn’t negatively affect the livelihood of these small business and doesn’t affect the CNMI’s economy further.

“I really believe there should be a program that allows responsible users to use

the Grotto at least until 5pm. Our industry is paying taxes and our taxes contribute to the upkeep of the Grotto and keeping it open. I just believe that the dive industry was not consulted before these cutbacks were implemented,” he said.

As for the Marianas Visitors Authority, acting managing director Judy Torres described the shortened Grotto hours as “unfortunate.”

“It is unfortunate that operation hours of the Grotto will be reduced, as it is our most popular dive site. However, we understand the financial constraints being faced by the Department of Lands & Natural Resources, as the MVA is facing the same challenge this fiscal year. DLNR plays an important role in managing our natural resources, and the MVA aims to keep the lines of communication open with them on this and other matters of mutual concern related to the recovery of our tourism economy,” she said.

Come write-in at JKPL

Want to start a writing habit for 2023? Marianas Writers Movement invites you to a “write-in” at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, VTC room, on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2023, from 10am to noon. Whether you want to write fiction or non-fiction, poetry, or prose, now is the time to start! The

write-in is nothing fancy—just a chance to write with others. Bring your own laptop, iPad, or notebook and pen. It’s free. Find more support for your writing habit at our website: <https://marianaswritersmovement.org/>. We hope to inspire and support all of the voices of the Marianas. Join us! (PR)

NURSES

From page 1

documentation sought by former CNMI RNs overseas.

Saipan Tribune tried to reach out to the Board of Nursing multiple times in the span of one week and lines were either unreachable or this reporter was given the run around, much like the many Registered Nurses who have been unable to continue their careers outside the CNMI due to this unconcern.

Three former Registered Nurses in the CNMI, who understandably agreed to speak with *Saipan Tribune* on the condition of anonymity, are in desperate need of answers and for their documents to be processed.

According to the first nurse, he has been tirelessly reaching out to the Board of Nursing for two months and the responses he has received have been short, repetitive, or sometimes he doesn’t receive an answer altogether.

“I am an RN overseas and also holds a current registration under Commonwealth of the NMI. At this point, we do not know who to reach or where to reach to get our frustrations heard. ...We’ve sent several emails to the Board of Nursing, called their landline phone numbers but nothing is being done. At the moment, when you ring them, it is just busy. It’s been two months that we’ve been waiting for our documents but until now we are told the same reason. Every time we ask for any update on status of our request, we get nothing but frustration. Please help us reach them. What truly frustrates us is that we do not know how long we still have to wait after two months of waiting,” he said.

He said there are hundreds of other nurses just like him and they need help.

“We are hundreds of nurses abroad asking the NMI Board of Nursing to speed up the release of a document, a ‘Certificate of Good Standing,’ from

their office. It is a very important requirement to get our registration in our desired countries where we would like to work, but up to this day, after several attempts, we begged and cried but nothing has been done. Our voices are not being heard. We are powerless. We feel unvalued, considering that we are Registered Nurses in the Commonwealth. We cannot work as Registered Nurses because of this document they fail to give us. We have families to feed back in our home countries. We are hundreds of applicants outside the NMI who are endlessly waiting for answers from them,” he said.

According to another overseas nurse, she has been waiting patiently for her Certificate of Good Standing, or COGS, which is the last requirement she needs in order for her to continue her nursing career in Australia.

“It was a dream to finally become a USRN when I registered with the NMI. At the same time, I passed the final nursing exam here in Australia and I am now eligible for nursing registration. One of [Australia’s] requirement is to submit a Certificate of Good Standing from all the Board of Nursing where I am currently registered. I am registered in the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates, and the NMI. The first two countries have already submitted the COGS to [the Australia nursing board] within a day of application, which was really great. However, with NMI Board of Nursing, they said they have an overload of requests and backlogs so they said it would take time. By the way, for the COGS to be processed, I had to send a \$40 bank draft and a request letter by snail mail. In the Philippines and UAE, all were processed electronically. I paid online and the certificate was generated electronically as well,” she said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



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MCS Theatre Club presents 'True Colors'

Mount Carmel School's Theatre Club is all set to present its next theatrical production, "True Colors." The show is an original jukebox musical about a girl on the autism spectrum who struggles to find her place and her voice at a new school. As a jukebox musical, the show will blend an original script with pop music favorites from the 1970s through the present, including the show's title song from Cyndi Lauper.

As a musical, singing takes center stage for many of the scenes. Leading those scenes

is the show's vocal director, Amber Mendiola Romolor. She said, "being a part of the production has truly been a humbling and amazing experience." As she put it, "The crew are so creative and talented, the story will pull at your heartstrings, and the way the songs are performed will definitely leave you speechless."

An accomplished singer herself, Romolor was honored to follow in the footsteps of her sister, Anna Rose Deleon Guerrero, who served as vocal director for the Theatre Club's

production of "The Sound of Music" almost exactly one year ago. Romolor added, "I'm extremely excited for the community to experience this production!"

In addition to singing, dancing plays an important role in the show. For the lead chore-

ographer, senior, and Theatre Club veteran, Donnie James Jr. Calma Militante, it was an opportunity he jumped at. After acting in numerous productions, he was excited to contribute his creative ideas to the show. He said, "I am elated to have orchestrated

such a beautiful composition." As far as the show's focus on colors, Militante welcomed the challenge. As he put it, "Choreographing for this production has had me adapt my style to the colorful themes presented."

The script for "True Colors" was written by Theatre Club founder and Northern Marianas College president Galvin

Deleon Guerrero, EdD. The show is directed by senior and Theatre Club veteran Kyla Cabrera, who also co-directed the club's production of "The Sound of Music" last year. Junior Bernice Shane Sabino, who played Maria in "The Sound of Music", is back to play another lead role, this time as Iris, the lead character.

"True Colors" runs Friday, Jan. 27, and Saturday, Jan. 28, at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret with doors opening at 6:30pm each night. Tickets are \$25 for limited premium seats and \$10 for general admission and may be purchased at the Mount Carmel School Business Office.

The production is made possible by support from the CNMI Department of Community and Cultural Affairs and the CNMI Council for Arts and Culture with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information, call 234-6184 or visit www.mountcarmelsaipan.com. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mount Carmel School Theatre Club cast rehearse a choreographed song in "True Colors." As a jukebox musical, the show employs music and choreography to dramatize the central character's struggle on the autism spectrum as she tries to find her place and her voice at a new school.

USCIS extends COVID-19-related flexibilities

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is extending certain COVID-19-related flexibilities through March 23, 2023. Under these flexibilities, USCIS considers a response re-

ceived within 60 calendar days after the due date set forth in the following requests or notices before taking any action, if the request or notice was issued between March 1, 2020, and

March 23, 2023, inclusive:

- Requests for Evidence;
- Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notices of Intent to Deny;
- Notices of Intent to Revoke;
- Notices of Intent to Re-

scind;

■ Notices of Intent to Terminate regional centers;

■ Notices of Intent to Withdraw Temporary Protected Status; and

■ Motions to Reopen an N-400 Pursuant to 8 CFR 335.5, Receipt of Derogatory Information After Grant.

In addition, USCIS will consider a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, or a Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Under Section 336 of the INA), if:

The form was filed up to 90 calendar days from the issuance of a decision we made; and

We made that decision between Nov. 1, 2021, and March 23, 2023, inclusive.

USCIS anticipates that, barring changes presented by the pandemic, this will be the final extension of these accommodations, and requesters must comply with the response requirements set forth in any request or notice dated after March 23, 2023.

As a reminder, the reproduced signature flexibility announced in March 2020 became a permanent policy on July 25, 2022.

Please visit uscis.gov/coronavirus for USCIS updates related to COVID-19.

For more information on situations such as natural disasters or other unforeseen circumstances (including COVID-related illness), where USCIS may provide accommodations, on a case-by-case basis upon request, please visit the Immigration Relief in Emergencies or Unforeseen Circumstances page. (PR)



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Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) hereby give notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on **Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the BPL-HCPLB Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (12/07/2022)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
 - Board Resignations
 - Vacancy on the Board – Rota Representative (Public)
 - 2023 NCARB Regional Summit – Honolulu, HI – (03/02-4/2023)
 - NCARB Visit to Saipan
- VII. Director's Report
 - 2023 BPL National Councils Meeting Schedule
 - 2023 NCEES Zone Interim Meeting – Houston, TX – (04/27-29/2023)
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office
 - MEMO – Board Resignation
 - B. Legislature
- X. Old Business
 - A. Proposed Regulations for Real Property Appraiser - For Board Approval
 - B. Proposed Local Examination for Real Property Appraiser - For Board Approval
- XI. New Business
 - A. Federal Law – Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act
 - B. Election of Officers
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
 - A. New Application
 - B. Renewal Applications
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
Special Education Program



PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the "Open Government Act", the Public School System State Board of Education, through their Special Education State Advisory Panel (SESAP), is hereby serving notice to the general public that it will hold a **Special Meeting on Monday, January 30, 2023 from 9:00am to 11:00am** via videoconferencing. This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcome.

AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters
 - Roll Call
 - Presence of a Quorum
 - Adoption of Agenda
 - Adoption of Minutes
 - November 25, 2019
- II. FFY 2021 State Performance Plan/ Annual Performance Report
- III. Miscellaneous
- IV. Adjournment

In compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting, but require accessibility such as large print or sign language interpreters must call 237-3029/3012. Several days notice is necessary to allow organizers ample time to make necessary arrangements.

/S/ Donna Flores
Secretary

/S/ Donna Flores
Director, Special Education Program

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UOG Sea Grant, Guahan Sustainable Culture to offer off-grid aquaculture

The University of Guam Sea Grant and Guahan Sustainable Culture will hold a half-day aquaculture workshop and food demonstration from 10am to 1pm on Saturday, Jan. 28, at the Sagan Kotturan CHamoru (SKC) in Tamuning.

Participants will learn about operating and managing a basic aquaculture set-up and running an off-grid system.

UOG Sea Grant aquaculture specialist David Crisostomo

will facilitate the workshop and the hands-on fish harvesting demonstration with the participants.

GSC's system inside the SKC compound fully operates on solar energy.

"We run off on just a 100-watt air pump and that is enough to operate the entire system. It's low-energy, and fairly low maintenance. We can produce about 400 lbs. of fish per year if it is stocked up to the maximum density,"



UOG From left, UOG Sea Grant aquaculture specialist David Crisostomo, Guahan Sustainable Culture president Michelle Crisostomo, and GSC vice president Marlyn Oberiano feed the tilapia fish stock in the GSC aquaculture tank. UOG SG and GSC will hold a workshop on aquaculture on Saturday, Jan. 28, at the Sagan Kotturan CHamoru in Tamuning.

UOG Press awarded an Equity in Verse grant from the Poetry Foundation

The University of Guam Press was recently awarded an Equity in Verse grant from the Poetry Foundation.

The grant seeks to celebrate the legacy of past Black, Indigenous, and people of color poets in part by providing financial support to nonprofit poetry and literary organizations led and staffed by people of color.

The program proved to be competitive with nearly 250 proposal applications submitted but only 39 awardees. UOG Press was awarded \$65,000—one of the highest awards granted this cycle.

UOG Press will use the award to fund its Famalao'an Poets Project, which will provide editing, marketing, and distribution services to two indigenous CHamoru poets.

"We are very excited about this opportunity to center the voices and experiences of CHamoru women as expressed through their powerful poetry," says UOG Press Publishing Director Victoria-Lola

Leon Guerrero. "We hope the publications that emerge from this project will inspire young writers to share their stories and visions of the future."

The project will directly address the dearth of female-authored poetry collections and the severely underrepresented voices of CHamoru poets, in addition to expanding the publishing house's literary offerings. To supplement the Famalao'an Poets Project, UOG Press will provide cre-

Crisostomo said.

Local company Generation Renewable Inc. will show what is needed to implement this in a home, said GSC President Michelle Crisostomo.

Hyatt executive chef Mirko Agostini will also conduct a food demonstration using the tilapia harvested from the aquaculture system.

"The Hyatt has been really excited to be involved in sustainability and in our projects, and so we want to bring them in. Chef Mirko, the executive chef at the Hyatt, has offered to do a cooking demonstration with the tilapia. That will be

exciting," Crisostomo said.

Through UOG Sea Grant's funding and technical support, several recirculating aquaculture systems or RAS have been distributed to nonprofits and other community partners. UOG Sea Grant provided basic infrastructure support, workforce development, training, or workshops.

UOG Sea Grant plans to expand the program to other groups with the aim to revitalize the aquaculture industry in Guam.

There will be a \$20 registration fee to cover lunch and other costs. Register online at: <https://bit.ly/3GYBhH4>. (PR)



UOG The photo of the Palulap Color medallion that will be awarded to a member of the Guam community that best represents the fundamental academic principles of the University of Guam.

The Faculty Senate of the University of Guam is accepting nominations for the Palulap Medallion Award.

The Palulap Award is presented to a member of the Guam community who has made extraordinary contributions to the protection and promotion of academic freedom, institutional integrity, institutional and individual autonomy, and shared academic governance—the fundamental academic principles of the University of Guam.

The awardee will receive a plaque and a medallion engraved with the legendary Micronesian navigator Palulap,

representing wisdom and leadership, and symbols of Micronesian celestial navigation, including a sailing vessel, guiding stars, and land.

Nominations are solicited annually, although the award is only granted when a nominee unequivocally meets the award criteria. Nominations may be made posthumously as well.

The deadline to submit nominations is at 5pm, Feb. 15, 2023.

To make a nomination and for more information, visit www.uog.edu/faculty-senate/palulap-award or email msantos@triton.uog.edu. (PR)

» **Feb. 15**
deadline
approaching


CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

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COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE HORIGUCHI BLDG, GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.


QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB ARE DUE ON **JANUARY 31, 2022**, CLOSE OF BUSINESS AND CAN BE MADE TO ELI D. CABRERA., VIA E-MAIL AT eli.cabrera@becq.gov.mp OR PHONE AT 670-664-8500/1.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 01-2023

Opening date: January 09, 2023 Location: SAIPAN Position(s): (1) Receptionist/Secretary (1) Ports Police Officer I	Closing date: January 27, 2023 SALARY PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr. to \$15.10/hr.) PL 7/1 to 7/12 (\$9.73/hr. to \$16.65/hr.)
Location: PORT OF SAIPAN Position(s): (1) General Maintenance III	SALARY PL 7/1 to 7/12 (\$9.73/hr. to \$16.65/hr.)
Location: TINIAN Position(s): (2) General Maintenance I (2) Custodial I 4) Ports Police/ARFF Trainee	SALARY PL 2/1 to 2/12 (\$7.63/hr. to \$13.04/hr.) PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr. to \$12.42/hr.) PL 5/1 (\$8.83/hr.)

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Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

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CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Another notch in the grim tally: Monterey Park shooting was a choice we'll keep making

It's all too familiar. Flashing red and blue lights, crying survivors, body bags carried out by stone-faced paramedics and coroners. This time, it took place outside a Lunar New Year celebration in the predominantly Asian Los Angeles suburb of Monterey Park, with many innocents killed and wounded at a festivity meant to welcome a new cycle of possibilities, but instead became a tragic endpoint.

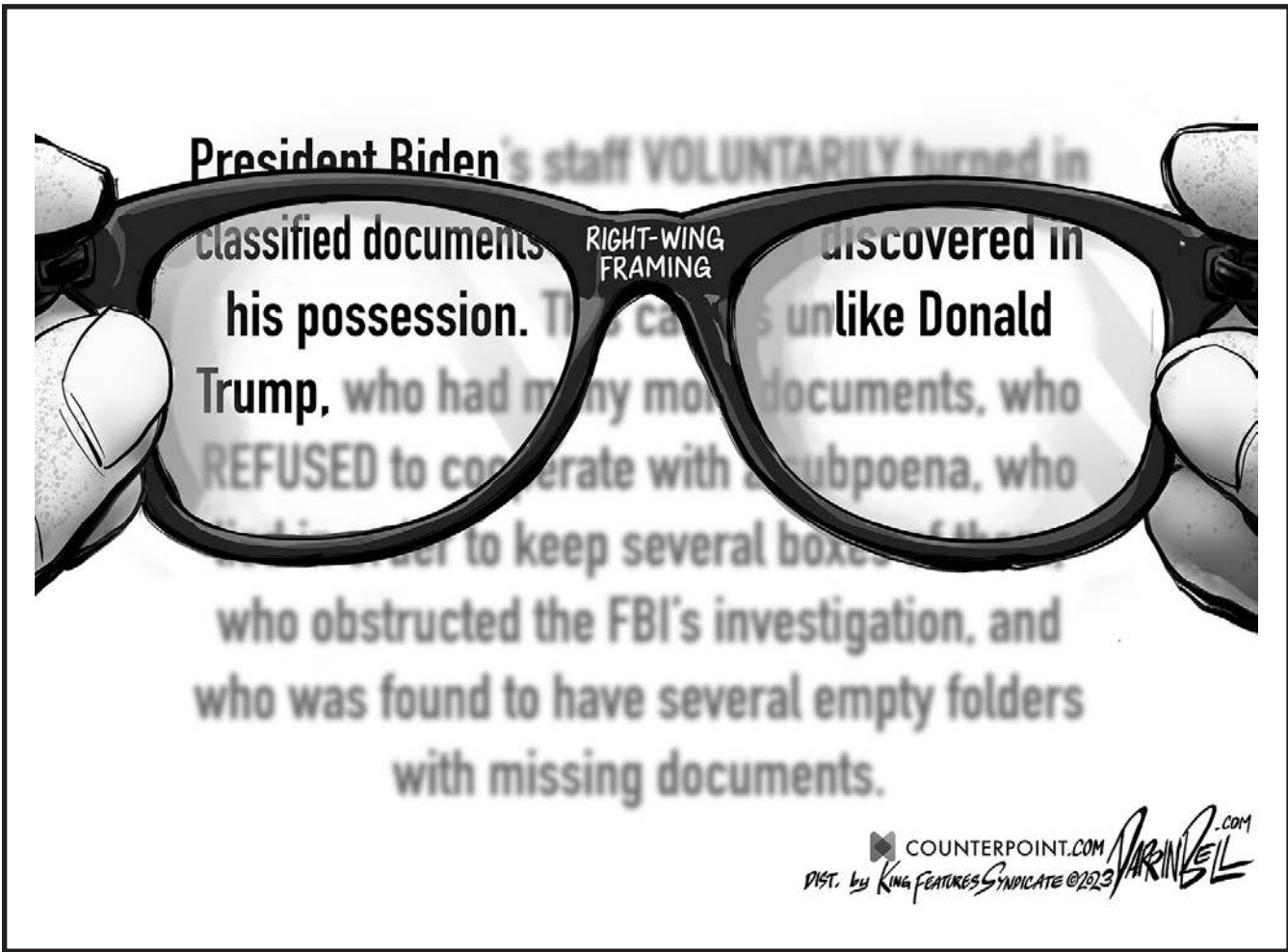
Each time this happens in this gun-mad country, the victims, the survivors, the weapons, the shooters and the motivations are different. Yet, as with every such shooting, two things are always true: it was an abomination that cut down the lives of those who wanted just to live in safety, and it was a choice, one we collectively made.

It is a choice to make it catastrophically simple to purchase semiautomatic long guns for personal use. It is a choice to allow civilians to waltz into a gun store and walk out with multiple magazines and hundreds of rounds of ammunition, ready to be fed into a machine whose only purpose is to maim and kill.

The specifics here don't change the impact of those choices. Even if the gun was bought illegally, that wouldn't be possible without the streets awash in firearms that were at some point sold legally with little oversight. Even if the gunman was acting on some personal vendetta, you can't escalate a grievance to a mass killing without the tools to do so. Even if this was the end result of a condition that went untreated in our woefully deficient mental health system, our failure on that front wouldn't produce a slaughter with such ease without our failure to control guns.

None of this will matter. The pro-gun factions will always have another what if. There's never an answer except that this sort of thing is inevitable. It isn't. It never has been. We chose this and we will just keep choosing it unless we actively change course, if we ever have the courage.

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Why the Monterey Park shooting feels like an attack on Asian America

For thousands of fellow Asian Americans, Monterey Park is our home — even if we don't live there.

For immigrants and their children, the location of Saturday's tragedy that killed 11 people was personal and familiar: a dance hall during festive Lunar New Year celebrations. And more so, it was Monterey Park — a town whose Asian strip malls, stores and houses of worship reflect the everyday lives of our ancestors who chose to put down roots in the United States.

Similar to how Grant Avenue and Mott Street served as lifelines for the Chinese in San Francisco and New York, respectively, during the early 20th century, so have Garvey Avenue and Atlantic Boulevard in Monterey Park been lifelines for this community for decades. These are not just neighborhoods; to many, these are sacred sites of cultural preservation and celebration. Monterey Park represents Asian America, today — how far we've come and how we've built community despite encountering barrier after barrier. This is part of why Saturday hit so hard.

How did Monterey Park become an Asian American hub? From the mid-1800s until the 1960s, foreign- and U.S.-born Asians were often forced to live in less desirable neighborhoods. Low wages and bigotry relegated Asians to places including those areas that became Chinatown. At the same time, these ethnic enclaves protected these residents from critics and racial agitators who questioned their presence in America.

When immigration restrictions relaxed following the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, newer waves of Asian settlers acquired incomes that afforded entry into more fashionable parts of the city or in the suburbs. Money, along with increased tolerance of Asian Americans, allowed settlement away from historic Chinatown, Filipinotown and Japantown. Though those enclaves still exist, for the last 30 years these communities have no longer been confined to the city.

Monterey Park reflects this expansion. During the 1950s and 1960s, a small stream of Japanese Americans settled in the community, a rarity during an era of restrictive housing covenants. People of Chinese descent soon followed thanks to Frederic Hsieh. Hsieh — a Chinese investor — purchased property in Monterey Park in the 1970s. He declared it the future "Chinese Beverly Hills," garnering attention from would-be immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Then in the 1980s, some in the area chastised Asian immi-

By JAMES ZARSADIAZ
Los Angeles Times

James Zarsadiaz is associate professor of history at the University of San Francisco. He is the author of "Resisting Change in Suburbia," a book about Asian American suburbanization and the east San Gabriel Valley.



grants for not assimilating. Asians quickly found out that their presence was not welcomed by many, as they faced battles over allowing Chinese business signage and efforts to make English the official language of places such as Monterey Park.

After a period of growing pains, the temperature cooled down. Many residents unhappy with the demographic changes left the suburb. By the early 1990s, Monterey Park became majority-Asian, with Chinese culture on full display and an array of Asian businesses to patronize. The suburb joined its urban counterparts as an established Chinatown, embodying how millions of Asian Americans live today — inside or close to an ethno-burb where access to Asian goods, services and culture is within a stone's throw.

Saturday's mass shooting in Monterey Park rattled Asian America. It triggered feelings the community has been grappling with for the last three years or, arguably, the last two centuries. Was the shooting an act of anti-Asian bigotry? Why did it happen here? These are natural reactions given the long list of violent crimes committed toward Asian Americans, oftentimes in unexpected places: the 2021 Atlanta spa shootings; the killing of Vicha Ratanapakdee in San Francisco the same year; the bus stabbing of an 18-year-old Asian woman in Bloomington, Ind., this month, just to name a few.

To be sure, violence — whether or not it is driven by prejudice — happens everywhere in the U.S. But given the political climate since 2020, it is hard for Asian Americans to not automatically think that hate is the force behind any attack in our communities.

While the motives of the Star Ballroom Dance Studio perpetrator are still being investigated, what is clear is that Asian Americans remain a population forced to live on high alert — even in places we've understood to be safe and comfortable. Now this includes Monterey Park.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Democrats are now united, and it's likely to last

This month's extended fight over the House speaker-ship confirms once again that America's two major parties don't operate as mirror images of each other. While Republicans engaged in a dramatic intramural battle — complete with threats, name-calling, and even an attempted physical confrontation — Democrats behaved with relative serenity, electing their leaders by acclamation.

The Democrats' comparatively harmonious state is often ascribed to the talent of leaders such as President Joe Biden and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who are adept at cutting deals and enforcing discipline. But most of the credit for making the Democrats a more unified party belongs to the voters.

The Democratic Party has long been organized as a "big tent" coalition of multiple jostling subgroups. But the most important divisions among its federal officeholders have historically occurred along a single fault line: On one side are moderates and conservatives elected from right-of-center Southern or rural constituencies; on the other are more liberal party regulars representing the left-leaning urban North and West.

When Democratic leaders have faced trouble enacting the policy agenda endorsed by the national party platform, opposition from the southern/rural wing has usually been the main impediment. These chronic dissenters turned against much of the New Deal in the late 1930s, blocked major civil-rights legislation until the mid-1960s, and defected to provide pivotal support for Ronald Reagan's tax and defense policies in the early 1980s. More recently, they helped to kill Bill Clinton's health-care plan in 1994 and temporarily imperiled

Barack Obama's more modest reform proposal 16 years later.

But the old-line Southern and rural Democrats are disappearing from office, replaced in most cases by Republican successors. By the most recent session of Congress, Democrats held just 32% of all Southern seats in the House (many of them majority-minority enclaves with mostly liberal electorates) and 18% in the Senate.

The party's popularity in rural America has eroded even more dramatically. By my calculations, the proportion of rural seats represented by Democrats nationwide dropped from 50% to 13% in the House, and from 50% to 17% in the Senate, between 2010 and 2022.

Democrats are gaining strength elsewhere, especially in well-educated suburban constituencies that became alienated by the Tea Party and Donald Trump. But most newly elected politicians from these areas are mainstream Democrats in the mold of Obama and Biden, with little political incentive or personal inclination to separate themselves from their party's national brand.

True, voters in several urban House districts have recently elected staunch progressives with a distinct political style. But the Democratic "Squad" is not simply a left-wing version of the House Freedom Caucus — it lacks the Republican renegades' oppositional attitude toward party leadership and has yet to demonstrate the same willingness to block major legislation on the grounds of ideological impurity. Unlike Republicans, Democratic voters have not shown much enthusiasm for nominating and electing candidates who engage in openly hostile battles against their own party's national leaders.

By DAVID A. HOPKINS

Bloomberg Opinion

David A. Hopkins is an associate professor of political science at Boston College and the author of "Red Fighting Blue: How Geography and Electoral Rules Polarize American Politics."



In a large, diverse country governed by just two major parties, unity will always be a relative term. Factions will continue to jockey for power, and the policy differences between the likes of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Joe Manchin will remain significant (though not always unbridgeable). But for all of the personal skill displayed by Biden, Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer in shepherding legislation through the last Congress, their task was made much easier by the larger geographic and electoral trends that have made their party much more ideologically coherent.

As former House Speaker Tip O'Neill famously remarked, "All politics is local." Even the most strategically gifted leader will have a hard time persuading politicians to vote the party line if they think it would anger the folks back home. More than anything else, Democrats' current harmony reflects the fact that few party members now see themselves as facing such a dilemma.

Skeletons in your closet? No problem, you can be a GOP candidate

On Jan. 16, Albuquerque police arrested Solomon Peña, a failed 2022 Republican candidate for the New Mexico state Legislature, for allegedly orchestrating shootings at the homes of four Democratic elected officials.

OK, maybe there's no way the party could have known he'd do that when they nominated him, but the fact that Peña had previously been convicted of 19 felonies and served nearly seven years in prison might have suggested some problems down the road.

This comes amid an ongoing scandal over new Republican House member George Santos of New York, who has been found to have fabricated pretty much every aspect of his life that he presented to voters last year. The head of the Nassau County Republican Party, in Santos' district, has called on him to resign.

What do these stories have in common? They suggest a Republican Party that simply doesn't vet candidates for office anymore. Even cursory background checks or interviews would have revealed some problems with these candidates, but today's GOP doesn't seem to care. What happened?

Screening candidates is actually a major role that parties traditionally play. Often, parties do most of that work in competitive races, trying to focus on the candidates they think can win and pressuring out candidates they think will be less appealing.

In 2018, for example, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee played a strong role in shaping the party's nomination for the House seat in Colorado's 6th District, recruiting and advocating for Jason Crow to be nominated, and he went on to win the seat against a Republican incumbent.

This kind of calculation by formal party leaders is a pretty common thing. But in the Crow case, there is even audio of a conversation that Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, then the House minority whip, representing the DCCC, had with Crow's primary challenger, Levi Tillemann, urging him to get out of the race. Hoyer's argument was that the party simply believed that Crow would have an easier time defeating the Republican incumbent, Rep. Mike Coffman. Tillemann refused to bow out, but lost to Crow in the primary. We'll never know how Tillemann would have done in the general election, but the party didn't want to take any chances.

And even when the general election doesn't look competitive, parties have often tried to discourage candidates who will hurt their brand and make them look bad. It wasn't that long ago that House Republican leaders pressured Rep. Steve King of Iowa to leave Congress; his racist outbursts were seen as damaging to the party's reputation.

While party influence may not always be so overt, the two parties have always been concerned about electability in general elections. But judging from the examples of Peña and Santos, the GOP is more than willing to leave that aside.

In fairness, it's not quite so simple as that. In numerous Senate races last year, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., spent his energies recruiting and endorsing candidates he thought were electable, but those candidates were often outgunned in the Republican primaries by those backed by former President Donald Trump.

Trump made a point of backing candidates like Herschel Walker, Blake Masters and Mehmet Oz — people who were famous or wealthy or just said nice things publicly about Trump. Those candidates all underperformed in the midterm election.

Research by political scientists Rachel Porter and Sarah Treul makes clear that there have been some important recent changes in American politics. More inexperienced people are running for office — and winning more often in primaries than they used to, particularly among Republicans since 2016.

Two important factors have driven this change. One is specifically the candidacy of Trump. Prior to 2016, Republicans had been, like Democrats, concerned about candidate electability. GOP leaders rallied around presidential candidates John McCain in 2008 and Mitt Romney in 2012 over other popular, more conservative leaders precisely because they believed that those two candidates had a better shot at winning the general election.

Republicans broadly predicted a Trump candidacy would be poison to the whole party ticket, but then it wasn't. For many of them, the lesson was, if Trump could take the White House, any electability analysis was out the window. If Trump could win after everything he said and did in 2016, maybe others could too. And indeed, the party has been far more tolerant of candidates

By SETH MASKET

Los Angeles Times

Seth Masket is a professor of political science and director of the Center on American Politics at the University of Denver.



such as Lauren Boebert, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Matt Gaetz and others, who until recently would have been considered the unpalatable fringe.

A second factor is the influence of conservative media such as Fox News, which are a dominant source of political information for Republican primary voters. These outlets generally don't portray extremist Republican candidates as such; instead, they portray them as unfair victims of the "mainstream media" and turn their accusations and attacks on progressive Democrats. It's hard to punish a problematic candidate inside an echo chamber.

Still, Boebert won her "safe" western Colorado district by fewer than 600 votes in November, and many candidates who parroted Trump's lies and conspiracy theories did worse.

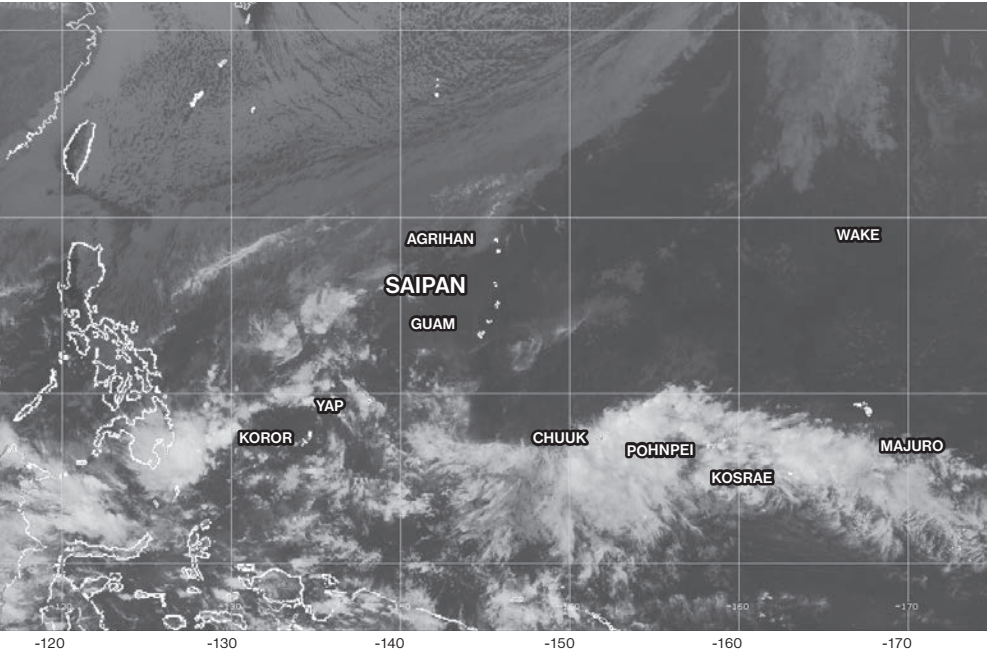
Could the poor midterm results cause the GOP to push back toward more candidate vetting?

Not necessarily. Among Kevin McCarthy's many concessions to Republican dissidents during his protracted effort to become House speaker was a pledge that the Congressional Leadership Fund — a large political action committee controlled by McCarthy — will not spend in future open primaries in "safe" GOP districts. This fund has been a major advocate of more moderate and electable candidates, spending a quarter of a billion dollars in the 2022 cycle, and now it will stand down. This move seems likely to produce more Boeberts, Gaetzes and Taylor Greenes, not fewer.

It's possible the Republican Party could once again become concerned about its reputation and want to avoid nominating serial liars and potential terrorists. But that's going to take work, and a lot of trends are already aiming it the other way.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny	
86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	75°	86°	75°	86°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:41 AM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Partly cloudy skies and just a few pinprick trade showers are seen on satellite. Trade winds and seas have lowered with 10-15 kt E winds and combined seas of 6 to 7 feet. An impressive cold front is seen far to the north.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Scattered Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Kosrae	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:46 AM	6:11 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:12 PM
Saturday	6:46 AM	6:12 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:13 PM
Monday	6:46 AM	6:13 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:15 AM	10:38 PM	-
Friday	10:54 AM	11:31 PM	-
Saturday	11:33 AM	-	-
Sunday	-	12:24 AM	12:13 PM
Monday	-	1:16 AM	12:54 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°	
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 27°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	68° / 59°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 70°	
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 32°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	77° / 50°	
Manila	Rain	88° / 75°	
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	72° / 54°	
Miami	Thunderstorms	80° / 65°	
New York	Mostly Cloudy	43° / 36°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	48° / 39°	
Paris	Showers	41° / 28°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 43°	
Rome	Rain	59° / 46°	
Salem	Showers	41° / 28°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60° / 45°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 34°	
Tokyo	Sunny	48° / 34°	
Washington, DC	Cloudy	43° / 33°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:57 AM	Low Tide	-0.24	
11:38 AM	High Tide	1.81	
5:55 PM	Low Tide	0.60	
11:04 PM	High Tide	1.50	

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
OZ624/701	3:50PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
				OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:20PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ623	9:00AM	2:20PM	3, 6
TW9308	3:30AM	7:10AM	2, 4	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
OZ624	3:50PM	7:40PM	3, 6	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:00PM	2:30AM+1	1, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS					
INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022					
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.	(Except Sundays)	7:35 A.M.	7:50 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
9:50 A.M.	10:05 A.M.		10:25 A.M.	10:40 A.M.	
4:00 P.M.	4:15 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)	4:35 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:10 A.M.	8:40 A.M.		9:00 A.M.	9:30 A.M.	
1:45 P.M.	2:15 P.M.		2:35 P.M.	3:05 P.M.	
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:10 A.M.	12:00 P.M.		12:30 P.M.	1:20 P.M.	
5:15 P.M.	6:05 P.M.		6:40 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.			
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022			
SAIPAN TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM			
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Soaring egg prices prompt demands for price-gouging probe

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—With egg prices more than doubling in the past year, calls are coming for an investigation into possible price gouging.

U.S. Sen. Jack Reed sent a letter Tuesday asking for the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether egg prices have been improperly manipulated by producers. A farmer-led advocacy group called Farm Action made a similar request last week arguing that there “appears to be a collusive scheme among industry leaders to turn inflationary conditions and an avian flu outbreak into an opportunity to extract egregious profits.”

The spike in egg prices has been attributed to the millions of chickens that were slaughtered to limit the spread of bird flu and farmers having to compensate for inflation driving up their costs.

But even though roughly 43 million of the 58 million birds slaughtered over the past year to help control bird flu have been egg-laying chickens, the size of the total flock has only been down 5% to 6% at any one time from its normal size of about 320 million hens.

The national average retail price of a dozen eggs hit \$4.25 in December, up from \$1.79 a



Cartons of eggs are on display at HarvesTime Foods on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023, in Chicago.

year earlier, according to the latest government data.

“At a time when food prices are high and many Americans are struggling to afford their groceries, we must examine the industry’s role in perpetuating high prices and hold those responsible accountable for their actions,” Reed, a Rhode

Island Democrat, said in his letter to the FTC.

But trade groups say egg prices are largely determined by commodity markets, and experts say the bird flu outbreak —combined with the skyrocketing cost of fuel, feed, labor and packaging and continued strong demand for

eggs—is the real culprit for the price increases.

“Current egg prices reflect many factors, most of which are outside the control of an egg farmer,” said Emily Metz, president and CEO of the American Egg Board trade group.

Purdue University agricultural economist Jayson Lusk

said “in my view, the basic economics of the situation well explain the price rise.” He said small reductions in egg supply can result in large price increases because consumer demand for eggs doesn’t waiver much.

The FTC didn’t immediately respond Tuesday

to questions about the egg price-gouging concerns, but the agency doesn’t generally comment on outside requests for investigations.

The largest U.S. producer of eggs, Cal-Maine Foods, was singled out by both Reed and the Farm Action group because it reported last month that its quarterly sales had jumped 110% to \$801.7 million on the record egg prices, helping it generate a \$198.6 million profit, up from just \$1.1 million a year earlier.

The Ridgeland, Mississippi-based company said it “wants to assure its customers we are doing everything we can to maximize production and keep store shelves stocked” and the “domestic egg market has always been intensely competitive and highly volatile even under normal market circumstances.”

The prices Cal-Maine charges its customers are determined by negotiations with the grocery store chains, club stores and distributors it sells to. Cal-Maine said its prices averaged \$2.71 a dozen in the most recent quarter. That’s almost double the \$1.37 it was getting a year earlier, but still much lower than the prices consumers are paying.

Justice Dept. sues Google over digital advertising dominance

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Justice Department and eight states filed an antitrust suit against Google on Tuesday, seeking to shatter its alleged monopoly on the entire ecosystem of online advertising as a hurtful burden to advertisers, consumers and even the U.S.

government.

The government alleged in the complaint that Google is looking to “neutralize or eliminate” rivals in the online ad marketplace through acquisitions and to force advertisers to use its products by making it difficult to use competitors’ of-

ferings. It’s part of a new, if slow and halting, push by the U.S. to rein in big tech companies that have enjoyed largely unbridled growth in the past decade and a half.

“Monopolies threaten the free and fair markets upon which our economy is based. They stifle

innovation, they hurt producers and workers, and they increase costs for consumers,” Attorney General Merrick Garland said at a news conference Tuesday.

For 15 years, Garland said, Google has “pursued a course of anti-competitive conduct” that has stalled the rise of rival technologies and manipulated the mechanics of online ad auctions to force advertisers and publishers to use its tools. In so doing, he added, Google “engaged in exclusionary conduct” that has “severely weakened,” if not destroyed, competition in the ad tech industry.

The suit, the latest legal action brought by the government against Google, accuses the company of unlawfully monopolizing the way ads are served online by excluding competitors. Google’s ad manager lets large publishers who have significant direct sales manage their advertisements. The ad exchange, meanwhile, is a real-time marketplace to buy and sell online display ads.

Garland said Google controls the technology used by most major website publishers to offer advertising space for sale, as well as the largest ad exchange that matches publishers and advertisers together when ad space

is sold. The result, he added, is that “website creators earn less and advertisers pay more.”

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, demands that Google divest itself of the businesses of buyer, seller and auctioneer of digital display advertising, remaining with search — its core business — and other products and services including YouTube, Gmail and cloud services.

Digital ads currently account for about 80% of Google’s revenue, and by and large support its other, less lucrative endeavors. But the company, along with Facebook’s parent company, Meta, has seen its market share decline in recent years as smaller rivals grab bigger portions of the online advertising market. Beyond that, the overall online ads environment market is cooling off as advertisers clamp down on spending and brace for a potential recession.

Alphabet Inc., Google’s parent company, said in a statement that the suit “doubles down on a flawed argument that would slow innovation, raise advertising fees, and make it harder for thousands of small businesses and publishers to grow.”

Tuesday’s lawsuit comes as the U.S. government is increas-

ingly looking to rein in Big Tech’s dominance, although such legal action can take years to complete and Congress has not passed any recent legislation seeking to curb the influence of the tech industry’s largest players.

The European Union has been more active. It launched an antitrust investigation into Google’s digital ad dominance in 2021. British and European regulators are also looking into whether an agreement for online display advertising services between Google and Meta breached rules on fair competition.

An internet services trade group that includes Google as a member described the lawsuit and its “radical structural remedies” as unjustified.

Matt Schruers, president of the Computer & Communications Industry Association, said competition for advertising is fierce and the “governments’ contention that digital ads aren’t in competition with print, broadcast, and outdoor advertising defies reason.”

Dina Srinivasan, a Yale University fellow and adtech expert, said the lawsuit is “huge” because it aligns the entire nation—state and federal governments—in a bipartisan legal offensive against Google.

Biden meets with Democratic leaders as debt showdown looms

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden hosted the Democratic congressional leaders Tuesday at the White House as they face a new era of divided government in Washington, staring down a debt ceiling crisis and running up against a new House Republican majority eager for confrontation.

The president and the top Democrats used the private gathering in the Roosevelt Room to project a unified front against what Biden called “extreme Republican economic plans.” Rather than enter into negotiations with House Republicans to cut spending in exchange for raising the debt ceiling, the White House has stressed repeatedly that it wants Congress to lift the borrowing capacity without conditions. Democrats said

it’s up to Republicans to go public about what budget cuts the new House majority wants to make.

“Apparently they’re genuinely serious about cutting Social Security, cutting Medicare,” Biden said about the GOP proposals as he sat down with the Democratic leaders from the House and the Senate.

As the meeting began, Biden said Democrats were eager to talk about the GOP extremes. He scoffed at the Republicans’ proposed 30% sales tax.

“Look, I have no intention of letting the Republicans wreck our economy,” Biden added.

The coming showdown has a familiar precedent — a little more than a decade ago, a new generation of “tea party” House Republicans swept

to power, eager to confront the Obama administration to slash federal spending and curb the nation’s ballooning debt load. As vice president at the time, Biden was central to those negotiations, but the House Republicans and the White House could never strike a deal, causing a fiscal crisis. This go around, Biden and his Democratic allies in Congress are in no mood to broker deals with a new era of hardline Republicans led by the Freedom Caucus.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is eager to push Biden to the negotiating table, hoping to make good on the promises the GOP leader made to holdouts during his campaign to become House speaker to pare federal spending back to fiscal 2022 levels, which would be a sizable 8% budget cut.

Nation

Suspect in shootings at Half Moon Bay farms was employee

By MARYCLAIRE DALE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

In a country with more guns than people—and one emerging from three years of isolation, stress and infighting amid the pandemic—Americans are beginning 2023 with a steady barrage of mass slaughter.

Eleven people killed as they welcomed the Lunar New Year at a dance hall popular with older Asian Americans. A teen mother and her baby shot in the head in an attack that killed five generations. A 6-year-old shooting his first-grade teacher in the classroom. The list goes on.

“We’ve been through so much in these past few years, and to continue to see case after case of mass violence in the media is just overwhelming,” said Apryl Alexander, an associate professor of public health at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. “When does this stop?”

The carnage over eight days in California, where the dance hall victims Saturday night were among two dozen people killed in three recent attacks, brought painful reminders to families of last year’s school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. On Tuesday, several Uvalde families and parents traveled more than three hours to their state’s Capitol to renew calls for tighter gun laws, even if they have little chance of winning over the Republican-controlled Legislature.

In 2022, the United States marked its first deadly gun rampage of the year on Jan.



23 — a year ago Monday. By that same date this year, six mass killings have claimed 39 lives, according to a database of mass killings maintained by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

“People are dying every day. This shouldn’t be happening,” said Veronica Mata, whose 10-year-old daughter Tess was among the 19 children and two teachers slain in Uvalde. “If it takes us coming every week, then we are going to do it until we see something change.”

Americans have come to

endure mass shootings in churches and grocery stores, at concerts and office parks, and inside the homes of friends and neighbors. The violence is blamed on hatred toward other communities, grievances within a group, secrets within families and bitterness among colleagues. But it often ends when a man with a grudge grabs a gun.

Sometimes, it’s not clear whether a grudge is even part of the equation.

“There was no apparent conflict between the parties. The male just walked in and started shooting,” Yakima

Police Chief Matt Murray said after three people were shot dead at a Circle K convenience store in Washington state early Tuesday, adding to the national grief.

Gun sales in the U.S. hit historic highs as the coronavirus pandemic took hold, the economy stalled and people took to the streets to protest police brutality and racial injustice. Nearly 23 million firearms were sold in 2020, according to industry analysts. The surge largely continued the following year, with sales spiking 75% the same month that a mob attacked the U.S. Cap-

In reversal, US poised to approve Abrams tanks for Ukraine

WASHINGTON (AP)—In what would be a reversal, the Biden administration is poised to approve sending M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, U.S. officials said Tuesday, as international reluctance to send tanks to the battlefield against the Russians begins to erode. A decision to send a bit more than 30 tanks could be announced as soon as Wednesday, though it could take months for the tanks to be delivered.

U.S. officials said details are still being worked out. One official said the tanks would be bought under an upcoming Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative package, which provides longer-range funding for weapons and equipment to be purchased from commercial vendors.

The U.S. announcement is expected in coordination with an announcement by Germany that it will approve Poland’s re-

quest to transfer German-made Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine, according to one official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the decision has not yet been made public.

By agreeing to send the Abrams at an as-yet unspecified time under the assistance initiative, the administration is able to meet German Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s demand for an American commitment without having to send the tanks immediately.

Much of the aid sent so far in the 11-month-old war has been through a separate program drawing on Pentagon stocks to get weapons more quickly to Ukraine. But even under that program, it would take months to get tanks to Ukraine and to get Ukrainian forces trained on them. It wasn’t clear Tuesday how soon the U.S. will start training Ukrainian troops on the Abrams and roughly how soon

they can get to the battlefield.

Until now, the U.S. has resisted providing its own M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, citing extensive and complex maintenance and logistical challenges with the high-tech vehicles. Washington believes it would be more productive to send German Leopards since many allies have them and Ukrainian troops would need less training than on the more difficult Abrams.

Just last week, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl told reporters that the Abrams is a complicated, expensive, difficult to maintain and hard to train on piece of equipment. One thing Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has been very focused on, he said, “is that we should not be providing the Ukrainians systems they can’t repair, they can’t sustain, and that they, over the long term, can’t afford, because

it’s not helpful.”

A U.S. official familiar with White House thinking said the administration’s initial hesitancy was based on concerns about the requisite training and the sustainment of the tanks. The official added that the administration believes that such plans are now in place, but it could take time to implement them.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said he had nothing to announce on any U.S. decision regarding Abrams tanks. But he said, “anytime that we’ve provided Ukraine with a type of system, we’ve provided the training and sustainment capabilities with that.”

The administration’s reversal comes just days after a coalition of more than 50 senior defense officials from Europe and beyond met in Germany to discuss Ukraine’s war needs, and battle tanks were a prime topic.



ACROSS THE NATION

GOP states sue Biden admin over new border policy

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Twenty states with GOP attorneys general on Tuesday sued the Biden administration over a major change in immigration policy that would turn away more migrants but still allow 360,000 people to legally enter each year from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. The lawsuit, which was filed in a federal court in Texas, accuses the Biden administration of “arbitrarily” creating recent changes and overstepping its authority. Among those leading the challenge is Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who has succeeded before in temporarily stopping new immigration rules under President Joe Biden. The Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment on the lawsuit late Tuesday. The changes that Biden announced this month amounted to his boldest move yet to confront the arrival of migrants that have spiraled since he took office two years ago. The four nationalities that Biden addressed now make up the majority of those crossing the border illegally. There were more than 2.38 million stops during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, which is the first time the count topped 2 million. The administration has struggled to clamp down

FBI officials walk towards the crime scene at Mountain Mushroom Farm, Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023, after a gunman killed several people at two agricultural businesses in Half Moon Bay, Calif.

tol, before dipping to about 16 million this year.

Experts believe there are 393 million guns in private hands across the United States, which in 2022 was a country of 333 million people.

Some Americans say they don’t feel safe anywhere. A third avoid certain places as a result, according to the American Psychological Association, whose most recent study shows that the majority of Americans feel stressed.

Yet there seems little appetite to address some of the potential solutions, such as teaching conflict resolution skills in schools or re-examining our societal views of masculinity, according to Alexander.

on crossings, reluctant to take hardline measures that would resemble those of the Trump administration.

Prosecutor: After killing 8 on bike path, motorist was happy

NEW YORK (AP) The man who killed eight people on a Manhattan bike path five years ago in a bid to impress a terrorist group was happy and proud when he met FBI agents later that day, a prosecutor told jurors in a closing argument on Tuesday. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Richman said Sayfullo Saipov was smiling when he asked to hang the flag of the Islamic State group in his Manhattan hospital room after the Oct. 31, 2017 attack he carried out with a speeding rental truck. Saipov, 34, steered the truck onto a bike path along the Hudson River and the West Side Highway that is popular with tourists and Manhattan residents, mowing down bike riders. Richman urged jurors to convict Saipov of all charges in a case that could result in the death penalty. If the jury returns a guilty verdict on all charges after starting deliberations Wednesday, a penalty phase of the trial will begin a week later. Unless jurors unanimously choose death, the sentence would be life in prison. Individuals who were injured or lost loved ones at the hands of the Uzbek man were among those who testified during the trial.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Lavrov blames West for no Ukraine talks

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP)—Russia was willing to negotiate with Ukraine in the early months of the war, but the United States and other Western nations advised Kyiv against holding talks, Moscow's top diplomat said Monday. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks on a visit to South Africa were similar to those made last year by President Vladimir Putin. The U.S. and other Western nations have said that Russia isn't serious about hammering out a deal to end the nearly year-long war, which began on Feb. 24. "It is well known that we supported the proposal of the Ukrainian side to negotiate early in the special military operation and by the end of March, the two delegations agreed on the principle to settle this conflict," Lavrov said. "It is well known and was published openly that our American, British, and some European colleagues told Ukraine that it is too early to deal, and the arrangement which was almost agreed was never revisited by the Kyiv regime."

Taiwan's president says war with China 'not an option'

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen told Pope Francis in a letter that war with China is "not an option" and said constructive interaction with Beijing, which claims the island as part of its territory, depends on respecting self-ruled Taiwan's democracy. Vatican City is the last European government to have diplomatic relations with Taiwan instead of Beijing, although the United States and other Western nations maintain extensive informal ties. Taiwanese leaders are uneasy about Vatican efforts to develop relations with Beijing. Tsai, in the letter released by her office, expressed support for Vatican positions on Russia's war against Ukraine, "migrant-friendly policies" and public health. "We identify profoundly with your views," Tsai wrote. Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war and have no official relations but are linked by billions of dollars in trade and investment. The Chinese Communist Party regularly flies fighter planes and bombers near Taiwan to enforce its stance that the island is obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary.

UN aid chief seeking to reverse ban on Afghan women workers

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. humanitarian chief

and leaders of two major international aid organizations are in Afghanistan following last week's visit by a delegation led by the U.N.'s highest-ranking woman with the same aim — reversing the Taliban's crackdown on women and girls including its ban on Afghan women working for national and global humanitarian organizations. U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths was in the Afghan capital Monday along with Janti Soeripto, CEO of Save The Children US, and Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro, the secretary general of Care International as well as Omar Abdi, the deputy executive director of UNICEF, the U.N. children's agency. Dujarric said last month's Taliban ban on Afghan women working for non-governmental organizations has put some aid programs on hold and is "sowing fears that the already dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan will get even worse." Some 28 million Afghans are in need of food, medicine and other humanitarian aid, "a 350% hike in just five years," according to the latest report released Monday on the Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan, Dujarric said.

France: More women, children returned from IS camps in Syria

PARIS (AP)—France on Tuesday repatriated another group of women and children from former Islamic State group-controlled areas of Syria, the latest return of French nationals who'd been stranded in camps there, eyed warily by Paris. The group was made up of 32 minors and 15 adult women, France's national counterterrorism prosecutor's office said. It said the women, ranging in age from 19 to 56, were held in custody — some on the basis of arrest warrants previously issued against them. The children were placed in the care of protective services. The returnees had previously been detained in a sprawling, wretched and lawless camp in northeastern Syria that holds tens of thousands of women and children, according to Kurdish authorities in the region. Around 50,000 Syrians and Iraqis are crowded into tents in the fenced-in al-Hol camp. Nearly 20,000 of them are children; the rest are mostly the wives or widows of IS fighters.

Russia, Estonia expel ambassadors amid 'destroyed' relations

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia and Estonia on Monday were expelling the ambassadors from each other's countries in a tit-for-tat move, saying that their diplomatic missions will

be headed by charges d'affaires as relations between the countries sank to a new low over Ukraine. In a show of solidarity with its Baltic neighbor, Latvia announced that it would also downgrade diplomatic relations with Moscow as of Feb. 24. The Russian Foreign Ministry summoned Estonian Ambassador Margus Laidre and ordered him to leave the country by Feb. 7. The statement issued by the ministry said that Estonia's diplomatic representation from now on will be downgraded to a charge d'affaires that heads the

European Union country's mission in Moscow. The ministry said that the move was made in retaliation for Estonia's "new unfriendly step to radically reduce the size of the Russian Embassy in Tallinn."

Hipkins sworn in as New Zealand PM, pledges focus on economy

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Chris Hipkins was sworn in Wednesday as New Zealand's 41st prime minister, following the unexpected resignation last week of Jacinda Ard-

ern. Hipkins, 44, has promised a back-to-basics approach focusing on the economy and what he described as the "pandemic of inflation." He will have less than nine months before contesting a tough general election, with opinion polls indicating his Labour Party is trailing its conservative opposition. New Zealand Governor-General Cindy Kiro officiated the brief swearing in ceremony in front of his friends and colleagues after she earlier accepted Ardern's resignation. "This is the biggest privilege and responsibility of my life,"

Hipkins said at the ceremony. "I'm energized and excited by the challenges that lie ahead." Carmel Sepuloni was also sworn in as deputy prime minister, the first time a person with Pacific Island heritage has taken on the role. She congratulated Hipkins and thanked him for the trust he'd placed in her. After the ceremony, Hipkins said as an aside to reporters: "It feels pretty real now." Hipkins is known to many by the nickname "Chippy," which fits with his upbeat demeanor and skills as an amateur handyman.

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

† *Consolación "Connie" Cepeda Sablan*

"FAMILIAN NONG/GOYU"

February 24, 1951 – January 20, 2023

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her children, grandchildren & great grandchildren

Children & Family:

Raymond C. Sablan/Mares Mers (Raymond Nivon II)
Michael C. Sablan/Connie Pinaula (Michelle, Sophie)
Gregory C. Sablan/Julie (Glendalynn Connie S. & Derick Dela Cruz-Matthew, Mariana, Maverick),
Gregory DLR. Sablan Jr.
Anne C. Sablan (Roanne Isa, Ron Napu)
Manuel C. Sablan Jr. (Alannah Mae)
Sherry Lyn C. S./Michael Camacho (Christopher Bailey, Ryanalynn Connie, Hazel)

She will also be missed by her Brother, Sisters & In Laws:

Carmen C. Reyes, Lutmina C. Decherong, Margarita S. Cepeda, Soledad C. & Jose Ocampo, & Vicente DLG Cepeda

Juana S. Muna, Matilde S. Taisacan, Natividad Sablan, Raphael Mettao, Alfredo Gonzales, Pedro & Ignacia M. Sablan, Bernadita S & Isidro Cabrera, Margarita S Castro, Rita DLG Sablan

She is also survived by numerous relatives, friends, nieces & nephews.

In her new life she now joins her Husband: †Manuel Cabrera Sablan

Parents: Gregorio T Cepeda, Ana DLG Cepeda

Parents In Law: Tomas Palacios Sablan, Isabel Mendiola Cabrera Sablan

Brothers, Sisters & In Laws:

Lorenzo DLG Cepeda, Frank & Fe A Ada, Jose Reyes, Delores DLG Cepeda, Roman & Lydia A Cepeda, Jesus DLG Cepeda, Merced DLG Cepeda

Soledad S & Francisco Basa, Vicente & Maria Sablan, Faustina S & Fernando Benavente, Gregorio & Victoria Sablan, Jesus Sablan, Ana S & Henry Indalecio, Daniel Muna, Martin Taisacan, Maria S & Juan Ada, Isabel S & Melchor Maratita, Maria DLR Gonzales, Rita S Mettao, Thomas & Francisca Sablan, Joaquin & Grace Sablan, Jose Castro

Daily mass of intention is being celebrated at San Antonio at 6:00 pm.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, January 28, 2023. She will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 8:00 am to San Antonio Church. Responso Service will be at 8:30 am followed by Holy Rosary at 8:45 am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 am. Interment Service will be at 12:00 pm at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Children and Families

Environment

Biden's next climate hurdle: Enticing Americans to buy green

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden persuaded Democrats in Congress to provide hundreds of billions of dollars to fight climate change. Now comes another formidable task: enticing Americans to buy millions of electric cars, heat pumps, solar panels and more efficient appliances.

It's a public relations challenge that could determine whether the country meets Biden's ambitious goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030.

Relying on tax credits and rebates made the climate legislation—it was approved in August with only Democratic votes—more politically palatable than regulations that force wholesale changes in polluting industries.

But it also means the administration's battle against global warming will be waged "one household at a time," said Shannon Baker-Branstetter, who works on energy issues at the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank closely aligned with the White House.

"It is very incremental," she said. "So it requires a very sophisticated communications strategy."

Biden acknowledged the hurdle during a recent Cabinet meeting as he talked about the incentives that are becoming available this year.

"Folks need to know how to take advantage of these benefits that we passed. That's on all of us around the table here to make sure we get that message out clearly," he said.

The White House says it is piecing together a plan to partner with state governments, contractors, retailers and social media influencers to get the word out. "Lowering utility bills is going to be a key driver," said Josh Peck, a senior policy adviser on clean energy issues.

It's also collaborating with Rewiring America, a nonprofit focused on ways to electrify homes and businesses, and companies like Airbnb, Redfin and Lyft. As part of the effort, Rewiring America created an online calculator that shows what credits or rebates homeowners might be eligible for, depending on their ZIP code and income.

Buying a heat pump or installing solar panels is "a major expense line and a major opportunity for savings," said Ari Matusiak, the group's founder and CEO. "So it's really important to make sure people are aware of the resources they have available



David Richardson, co-founder of Elephant Energy, leans on the condenser placed on the roof during the installation of a heat pump in an 80-year-old rowhouse Friday, Jan. 20, 2023, in northwest Denver.

and the benefits they can unlock in terms of bringing energy bill savings."

But the White House faces an uphill battle.

Polling shows that while Americans support action to slow climate change, they are broadly unaware of the Inflation Reduction Act, the massive legislation that includes financial incentives to lower emissions, and skeptical of their own role in the climate crisis.

An AP-NORC poll released in September, one month af-

ter the law was signed, found that 61% of U.S. adults said they knew little to nothing about the legislation. And despite the multibillion-dollar investment in climate solutions, only a third said it would help climate change; about half said it wouldn't make a difference.

The White House says it's not rattled by the results. The goal is to make sure consumers know the financial benefits of energy efficient products at the moment that they're making key decisions on which

products to buy, Peck said.

"One of the challenges here is trying to meet consumers where they are when they make decisions about these purchases," he said.

Majorities of U.S. adults said they are unlikely to install solar panels or buy an electric vehicle in the next three years, according to the AP-NORC poll. Among those, at least half said financial incentives would not make a difference in their decision.

Homeowners typically are reluctant to swap out furnac-

es or water heaters until they absolutely have to shell out the money for them.

"One day the heat won't turn on and it's negative 10 (degrees) outside and you say, 'Oh crap, I've got to get a furnace,'" said DR Richardson, co-founder of Elephant Energy, a Colorado company that helps homeowners install electric heat pumps and other appliances. "So the biggest challenge from our perspective, and from a climate perspective, is to get people to think ahead of time about how to replace these assets."

Most homeowners don't understand what equipment qualifies for a rebate or a tax credit—and even contractors are not always aware, Richardson said. While some heat pumps qualify for a full rebate, others do not or are only eligible for partial rebates.

"So it's just a nightmare if you're not used to working in building spreadsheets to analyze and understand all this stuff," he said.

Not all of the incentives are ready either. While people can get a tax break on the cost of an electric car, solar panels or heat pump, rebates for low- and middle-income Americans seeking to make their homes more energy efficient are not yet available. The Energy Department is still developing the system to distribute that money.

Cecilia Muñoz, director

of the White House Domestic Policy Council in the Obama administration, said she learned in her tenure that it's critical for government to invest in the delivery of policies.

"Too often we as advocates and policymakers applaud when policy gets enacted and then stop paying attention," she said. Instead, they need to design ways to target people directly to help them "understand the steps that they can take and the ways that the government is going to make it easy."

The Energy Department has begun releasing information to states about their allotment of \$9 billion to support household energy upgrades, including weatherizing homes and installing heat pumps.

And Biden, a self-described "car guy," has been doing his part to promote electric vehicles, making appearances at the Detroit car show in September and on the TV series "Jay Leno's Garage."

Donnel Baird, founder and CEO of BlocPower, a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based company that partners with utilities, government agencies and building owners to improve energy efficiency, has worked with Lowe's and other retailers to promote green appliances.

The idea, Baird said, is that "the checkout person says, 'You know, you can get a tax credit if you don't get that gas lawn mower and get a green one instead.'" While such engagement may not have immediate results, Baird said he's confident the tax credits and other benefits of the climate law will become better known.

"It took years for the ACA to get going," he said, referring to the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. "I think the same thing could happen with this law."

Dan Pfeiffer, a former top communications adviser to President Barack Obama, sees another lesson in the Affordable Care Act.

"The ACA got more popular the more that Republicans tried to repeal it," he said, suggesting that Biden take advantage of any Republican efforts to roll back to the Inflation Reduction Act to draw more attention to the law's benefits.

"I have no doubt the White House has thought of all of this," Pfeiffer said. But the problem is that none of it is easy."

He added: "The bulk of the work starts now."



President Joe Biden drives a Cadillac Lyriq through the showroom during a tour at the Detroit Auto Show, Sept. 14, 2022, in Detroit.

EVAN VUCCI

Life & Style

‘Everything Everywhere’ tops Oscar nominations with 11

NEW YORK (AP)—The multiverse-skipping sci-fi indie hit “Everything Everywhere All at Once” led nominations to the 95th Academy Awards as Hollywood heaped honors on big-screen spectacles like “Top Gun: Maverick” and “Avatar: The Way of Water” a year after a streaming service won best picture for the first time.

Daniel Scheinert and Daniel Kwan’s “Everything Everywhere All at Once” landed a leading 11 nominations on Tuesday, including nods for Michelle Yeoh and comeback kid Ke Huy Quan, the former child star of “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.” Released back in March, the A24 film has proven an unlikely Oscar heavyweight against the expectations of even its makers. Yeoh became the first Asian actor nominated for best actress.

“Even just to be nominated means validation, love, from your peers,” said an “overwhelmed” Yeoh speaking by phone from London. “What it means for the rest of the Asians around the world, not just in America but globally, is to say we have a seat at the table. We finally have a seat at the table. We are being recognized and being seen.”

The 10 movies up for best picture are: “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” “The Banshees of Inisherin,” “The Fabelmans,” “Tár,” “Top Gun: Maverick,” “Avatar: The Way of Water,” “Elvis,” “All Quiet on the Western Front,” “Women Talking” and “Triangle of Sadness.”

Nominations were announced Tuesday from the



Image Description: This image released by A24 Films shows, from left, Stephanie Hsu, Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan in a scene from, “Everything Everywhere All At Once.”

academy’s Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills, California, by Riz Ahmed and Allison Williams. If last year’s Oscars were dominated by streaming—Apple TV+’s “CODA” won best picture and Netflix landed a leading 27 nominations—movies that drew moviegoers to multiplexes after two years of pandemic make up many of this year’s top contenders.

For the first time, two sequels—“Top Gun: Maverick” and “Avatar: The Way of Water”—were nominated for best picture. The two films together account for some \$3.5 billion in box office. Tom Cruise missed

out on an acting nomination, but “Top Gun: Maverick”—often credited with bringing many moviegoers back to theaters—walked away with seven nominations, including best sound, best visual effects and best song for Lada Gaga’s “Hold My Hand.” Ryan Coogler’s “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,” made in the wake of Chadwick Boseman’s death, also scored five nominations, including the first acting nod for a performance in a Marvel movie: Angela Bassett, the likely favorite to win best supporting actress.

Nine of the 10 best-picture nominees were theatrical releases—something cheered by

“Tár” filmmaker Todd Field, nominated for direction and screenplay. Field noted the theatrical marketplace—especially the specialty business—is still in recovery mode.

“I hope that the faith and the enthusiasm that’s been paid for theatrical films continues,” Field said by phone Tuesday from Los Angeles.

Going by earlier guild nominations, Martin McDonagh’s Ireland-set dark comedy “The Banshees of Inisherin” may be the stiffest competition for “Everything Everywhere All at Once” at the Oscars. The Searchlight Pictures film landed nine nominations Tuesday,

including nods for McDonagh’s directing and screenplay, and a quartet of acting nominations: Colin Farrell for best actor, Kerry Condon for best supporting actress and both Brendan Gleeson and Barry Keoghan for best supporting actor.

Baz Luhrmann’s bedazzled biopic “Elvis”—another summer box-office hit, with \$287.3 million worldwide—came away with eight nominations, including a best actor nod for star Austin Butler and nominations for its costumes, sound and production design.

Though Steven Spielberg’s “The Fabelmans” struggled to catch on with audiences, the di-

rector’s autobiographical coming-of-age tale landed Spielberg his 20th Oscar nomination and ninth nod for best-director. John Williams, his longtime composer, extended his record for the most Oscar nominations for a living person, and, at 90, became the oldest nominee ever. Williams’ 53rd nominations trails only Walt Disney’s 59.

In the ultra-competitive best actress race, “Fabelmans” star Michelle Williams was nominated after being passed over by the Screen Actors Guild. The other nominees for best actress are: Ana de Armas, “Blonde”; Cate Blanchett, “Tár” and Andrea Riseborough, who emerged as a late contender after a host of celebrities rallied around her performance as an alcoholic West Texas mother in the little-seen “To Leslie.” Notably left out of the category were Viola Davis (“Woman King”) and Danielle Deadwyler (“Till”).

Only one streaming title broke into the best picture field: The German WWI film “All Quiet on the Western Front.” Though Netflix for the first time in years lacks a possible best picture frontrunner, “All Quiet on the Western Front” landed a better-than-expected nine nominations, including best international film and best adapted screenplay. The streaming service also has the top animated film contender in “Guillermo del Toro’s Pinocchio,” which was nominated for best animated feature alongside “Marcel the Shell With Shoes On,” “Puss in Boots: The Last Wish,” “The Sea Beast” and “Turning Red.”

Beneficiary uses hardship gift for other purposes

DEAR ABBY: I have a moral and ethical dilemma. I nominated a co-worker for a benefit through our company. The person was awarded what I consider to be a good sum (\$5,000) for replacement hearing aids.

Seven months have gone by and this person “still has the check” and hasn’t used the money for its intended purpose. They bought two “beater” cars and took a trip to New York City. I feel like I was duped. Should I call the hotline and let the foundation know my suspicions, or let it go? I feel that this person got away with what I feel are dirty deeds. What to do?

REGRETTING IT IN THE WEST

DEAR REGRETTING IT: “What to do” is contact the foundation that sent the generous check, explain your concerns and leave the ball in their court. They may, indeed, wish to follow up—and possibly inform the police—if there was fraud involved.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I’m stuck in a rut here. My girlfriend is anxious and depressed. I love her very much, and I want to help her. I understand that someone with anxiety and depression can be a handful, but sometimes I feel like I’m dealing with too much. My girlfriend is so deep in this state that no matter how I try, it seems like she doesn’t want my help at all. How do I

deal with this? I feel like I’m going mad.

NEED GUIDANCE IN THE EAST

DEAR GUIDANCE: I am sure you love your girlfriend very much, but it is important to realize that depression and anxiety are medical conditions. YOU cannot “fix” them. The most helpful thing you can do for your girlfriend would be to convince her to discuss what’s going on with her doctor so she can be referred to a licensed mental health provider. Medications are available that could help her, as well as talk therapy, which she may also need.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I’ve been a dental assistant for more than 20 years, and I’d like to share an observation with your readers. Over the years, we’ve seen many patients who diligently take care of their oral hygiene. Then, suddenly, we notice decay both clinically and on X-rays—after years of no decay. We ask them, “Are you taking a new medication that’s causing dry mouth? Have you started drinking some different beverage? Have you been eating more sweets?” More often than not, they tell us nothing’s changed.

The problem often is sugar where they don’t expect it—in fiber supplements, meal replacement shakes, gummy vitamins, chewable antacids, vitamin water, etc. Many of these items contain a surprising amount of sugar. Please encourage your readers to read the nutrition labels of their SUPPLE-

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



MENTS. It could save their teeth.

ANTI-DECAY IN DALLAS

DEAR ANTI-DECAY: Thank you very much for educating my readers and me. This is something I had never considered, and I’ll bet many of them haven’t either. Your letter is an important one, and I hope they will heed it as I plan to.

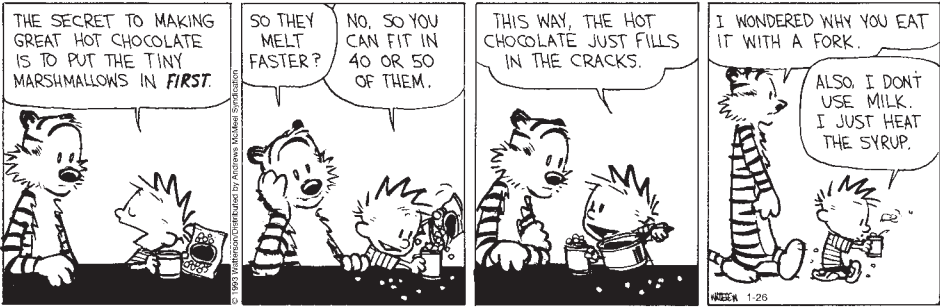
■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



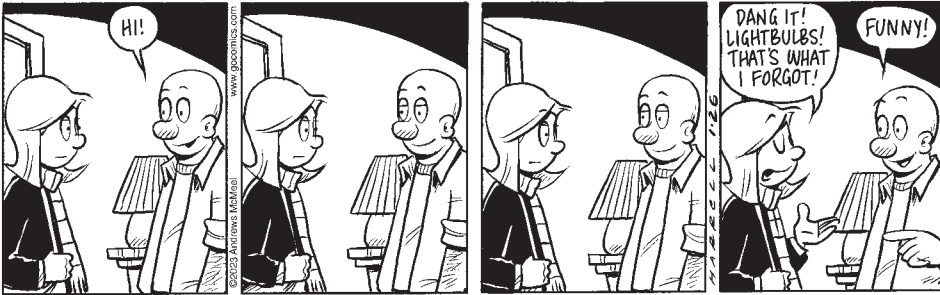
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 35 Goal 36 Autumn 1 Boot band 5 Use a pears camp 19 Roman 401 8 Teen's fear 2 Mr. 21 Italian "three" 12 Smooth-talking shapes singer 23 Heat setting 13 Literary collection 47 Squeeze (out) 24 Grand tale 14 Postal delivery 49 Israel's Abba sister 25 Decays 26 Genesis brother 15 Saw-bucks 50 Art Deco master 27 Arias for one 16 Erie Canal 51 Wardrobe malfunction variety 28 Blog remarks 17 Florence's river Fey 9 Travel groups 32 Followers of jays and swifts 18 Rob Roy spirit 53 Org. 10 French diarist 33 Iced desserts 20 Jazzy 54 Rds. 35 Nabokov novel 36 — canto 22 "House of Gucci" actor 55 Dance move Anais 38 Poet Nash 39 #2 execs 42 Life story? 26 PC character set 31 Benefit 32 Inlet 33 Tizzy 34 Shade tree

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 1-26

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Col-in O'Donoghue, 42; Sara Rue, 44; Ellen DeGeneres, 65; Lucinda Williams, 70.

Happy Birthday: Preparation and organization are essential this year. A minimalist attitude will help you curb bad habits and dodge overspending and situations that add stress to your life. Recognize what and who are good for you, and make decisions that bring you closer to your desired lifestyle. Consider what's important to you; build on these staples to achieve stability. Your numbers are 6, 11, 23, 28, 35, 39, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Emotions will surface. Take a step back and think before you say or do something you will regret. Scour the internet for answers, go to an expert, confide in someone you trust and put the best version of yourself before anyone who questions you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Stop, pay attention and do everything according to the rules and regulations. Studying and confirming every detail will give you the confidence you require to outsmart anyone trying to hold you back. Work relentlessly to beat the competition.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Rely on yourself, your experience and your knowledge to get you where you want to go. A physical move will encourage new beginnings and an opportunity to work alongside individuals who will rival and encourage you to do your best. Self-improvement is apparent.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Keep a watchful eye on others. Someone will likely sabotage your plans or make you look bad if given a chance. You may have to step

outside your comfort zone if you want to make a lasting impression on someone influential.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Do your best, and you'll get the support required to complete your plans. Don't let the changes happening at work cause insecurity. Your extra effort will go a long way when trying to impress someone in charge. Romance will lift your spirits.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Do what works for you. Ignore anyone pushing you in a direction you don't care to travel. Stick to basics and do things by the book. Set a budget and refuse to take on more debt or work than you can handle.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): There will be plenty of opportunities, but indecisiveness will stand between you and taking advantage of an offer. Clear your head and defer to an expert. Protect against physical injury or an altercation with someone who doesn't share your beliefs.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Dodge anyone putting pressure on you. Look for alternative ways to keep the peace and avoid a run-in with someone inconsistent or heading in a different direction. Be true to yourself and how you want to live. Avoid health risks.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You can be entertaining without overspending. Hosting an event or meeting or starting a discussion with those you live with will help make your life easier and your support system reliable. A personal pick-me-up will boost your energy and invite compliments. Romance is favored.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Change is looming, but baby steps will help control the outcome. Overseeing everything you want to achieve will eliminate mistakes and lower your costs. Sidestep anyone who tries to talk you into being extravagant. A change at home will ease stress and add to your comfort.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Be open about what you are willing to do for others and what you expect in return. Being honest will speed up getting what you want and when. Take notes, look at the facts and follow through without hesitation.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Confirm details before proceeding. If you say too much or overreact, you will face scrutiny that can interfere with what you are trying to achieve. Don't rely on others or leave anything to chance. Focus on your target and don't look back.

Birthday Baby: You are active, free-spirited and innovative. You are original and trendy.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★★★

1/26

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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SEEN IN A MALL

Solution: 11 letters

HTLA EHNRE MOTSUC
DBY GOLONHCETTEL
PORA EWLU EPROAGE
CUSA EFACREYRFNR
HTERN TSKTSEMOUK
SIMNEDRAETPHUOS
NQADWIA LAHPENLE
IUGWPLAEATPSTRT
UEOOESHRRONRAOA
QCERTT MATASUIRL
EIDCEAMPARWPNR
NFII CSAPLAYKAIC
NFVYSLBATHROOMO
AOUTLET LACITPOH
MANAGERINEVUOSC

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LeBron James scores 46 points, hits 9 3s in Lakers' loss



LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James hit a career-high nine 3-pointers while scoring 46 points, but the Los Angeles Clippers hit 19 3-pointers of their own on the way to a comfortable 133-115 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

James scored at least 40 points against the Clippers for the first time in his 20-year career, giving him a 40-point game against all 30 teams in the NBA. James hit his record ninth 3-pointer with 6:45 to play, setting a career high from distance in his 1,404th game.

James also ramped up his chase of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's career scoring record with his 101st 40-point game, including the postseason. He trails Abdul-Jabbar (38,387 points) by just 177 points, putting him in position to potentially break the record at the end of the Lakers' upcoming five-game road swing instead of back home in Los Angeles.

James' brilliance wasn't nearly enough: The Lakers never caught up after falling behind by 23 points, and James spent the final minutes on the bench after the Clippers pulled away for their 10th consecutive victory over their arena co-tenants in downtown Los Angeles.

Paul George had 27 points and nine rebounds, and Kawhi Leonard added 25 points in the Clippers' third straight win overall. The Clippers hit a season-high 15 3-pointers in the first half while scoring a season-high

77 points and jumping to a 23-point halftime lead.

HEAT 98, CELTICS 95

MIAMI (AP)—Bam Adebayo had 30 points and 15 rebounds, including the jump shot that put Miami ahead to stay with 20.4 seconds remaining, and the Heat rallied from 14 down to beat Boston.

Haywood Highsmith had 15 points and 10 rebounds, Max Strus scored 13 points and Victor Oladipo had 12 for the Heat.

A 15-0 run in the fourth quarter lifted the Heat, who split the regular-season series with the Celtics 2-2.

Jayson Tatum finished with 31 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists for the Celtics. Derrick White scored 23 points, and Robert Williams III had 11.

Tyler Herro stole a cross-court pass thrown by Jayson Tatum with just over a second remaining, denying Boston a chance to tie or take the lead.

Highsmith's free throw with 0.6 seconds left put Miami up by three. Boston called time, and Payton Pritchard's straightaway 30-footer fell short as time expired.

WIZARDS 127, MAVERICKS 126

DALLAS (AP)—Kyle Kuzma scored 30 points and made one of two free throws to break a tie with 4.2 seconds remaining, lifting Washington past Dallas.

Luka Doncic had 41 points and 15 rebounds for the Mavericks. Doncic still had on the jersey he ripped when he missed a free throw that



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, left, shoots as Los Angeles Clippers center Ivica Zubac defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023, in Los Angeles.

would have put Dallas in front with 12.5 seconds to go when he bumped Kuzma on a drive along the sideline. The Mavericks challenged, but the call was confirmed. Kuzma missed the first free throw, but swished the second.

Doncic tried twice to pass to Spencer Dinwiddie out of a double team on the final possession. The Wizards knocked the first out of bounds, and Delon Wright stole the second to seal the victory.

NUGGETS 99, PELICANS 98

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Nikola Jokic capped a 25-point, 11-rebound, 10-assist performance in his return from hamstring tightness with a go-ahead floater in the paint with 16.9 seconds left,

helping Denver beat undermanned New Orleans.

Jamal Murray scored 25 points for the Nuggets, who led for nearly the entire game and by as many as 19 points before New Orleans stormed back in the fourth quarter to take its only lead of the second half at 98-97 with 36.9 seconds left.

After Jokic put Denver back in front, the Pelicans had three shots to win it in the final seconds before losing their fifth straight.

CJ McCollum scored 20 points for New Orleans, but missed all eight of his 3-point shots.

SUNS 128, HORNETS 97

PHOENIX (AP)—Cam Johnson scored 24 points,

Dario Saric added 19 and Phoenix beat Charlotte for its fourth straight victory.

The Suns built a 30-point lead midway through the second quarter, though Charlotte cut it to 58-50 early in the third. Phoenix rebuilt its lead to 98-77 by the fourth before cruising to the comfortable victory.

Johnson was hot from the outset, scoring 16 points in the first quarter by making all six of his shots, including four 3-pointers. The forward was playing in his third game since returning from a knee injury that kept him out more than two months. He needed just 18 minutes on the floor to do his damage, shooting 9 of 11 from the field and 6 of 7 on 3s.

Terry Rozier scored 19 points for Charlotte.

KNICKS 105, CAVALIERS 103

NEW YORK (AP)—Julius Randle had 36 points and 13 rebounds, and his eighth 3-pointer snapped a tie with 2:07 left as New York beat Cleveland.

Donovan Mitchell had 24 points, eight assists and eight rebounds in his return to the Cavaliers from a three-game absence with a left groin strain. But he had been stopped on his last three attempts at the rim and was slow to get up after falling to the ground in an effort to save Cleveland's final possession, saying afterward his legs cramped.

RJ Barrett added 16 points and Jalen Brunson had 14 for the Knicks, who snapped a four-game losing streak. Jarrett Allen had 24 points and 12 rebounds for Cleveland, while Darius Garland added 22 points and six assists.

PACERS 116, BULLS 110

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Myles Turner and Bennedict Mathurin each scored 26 points and Mathurin's short, go-ahead basket with 29.1 seconds left helped Indiana close out a rally from 21 points down to beat Chicago.

Indiana snapped a season-worst seven-game losing streak to stay ahead of 10th-place Chicago in the Eastern Conference. The Pacers played again without injured point guard Tyrese Haliburton and this time without his replacement, Andrew Nembhard, who was sick.

T.J. McConnell had 20 points and 10 assists for the Pacers. DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points for Chicago.

DENVER (AP)—Contrary to all those high-scoring games, players still are playing defense in the NBA.

Seriously, they are.

It's just the task of stopping two-time reigning MVP Nikola Jokic or Luka Doncic or Joel Embiid or anyone else in the league has become more challenging than ever.

Indiana Pacers coach Rick Carlisle may have described the assignment of locking down a premier—or even a reserve—player the best: "It's a wild, hot mess trying to guard in the NBA now," he said.

A combination of rule changes, style-of-play alterations, the ongoing addiction to the 3-point shot and more have added up to the game being significantly tilted toward the offensive player.

Someone will win "Defensive Player of the Year" this spring, even after a season where no one seems to be able to stop anyone with the ball. It's almost certain that more players will average 20 points

Analysis: Trying to play good NBA defense 'wild, hot mess'

per game than ever before. A decade ago, there were a dozen or so players. This season, 50 isn't out of the question (there were 27 last season and 31 in 2020-21).

The NBA will analyze all the variables after the season. But since its sense is fans love scoring, and there's nothing out there contradicting that stance, a massive swing of the rules pendulum toward helping out defenders doesn't seem likely.

"For me, a fan, the talent level is just off the charts, and that has a lot to do with what we're seeing," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in Paris last week. "Of course, the enormous increase in 3-point shooting is going to lead to more scoring, too, especially when these guys, even the big men, shoot 3-point shots as well as they do."

"I don't think it's necessarily a case that defense is not being focused on as it once

was," Silver added. "I've been around the league long enough to remember when the claim was guys played no defense at all, and so there's a fair amount of defense played."

From zone defenses to constant rotations, teams are trying a little bit of everything to slow down offensive stars. Still, the stars shine. In January alone, Cleveland's Donovan Mitchell scored 71 points on Jan. 2; Chicago's Zach LaVine knocked down 11 3-pointers on Jan. 6; and Miami's Jimmy Butler went 23 of 23 from the free throw line on Jan. 10.

Playing defense is harder these days, but not impossible.

"It just requires a real connectedness defensively," Carlisle explained.

Scoring is up again this season, with teams averaging more points (114.1) than the league has seen at any time in the last half-century. Sacramento leads the way

with 120 points per game, with six players averaging 12 or more points.

It's hardly a surprise to longtime NBA veteran Ish Smith that 44 players are currently averaging at least 20 points a game.

"I guarantee you, when I come and show my kids the game in 10 or 15 years, we're going to be talking about how it might be 100 guys now averaging 20," cracked Smith, the Nuggets guard who broke into the league in 2010. "It's just a tribute to guys getting better. Everybody can dribble, shoot, pass—and it makes it difficult."

Bottom line: The standouts are simply doing what they do best—stand out. Doncic and Embiid lead in points per game (33.6), Jokic in triple-doubles (14), Shai Gilgeous-Alexander in two-point field goals (398) and Buddy Hield in 3-pointers (181).

"The league is in such a

great place and people are so into checking out highlights and seeing high scores for entertainment," said David Adelman, an assistant coach for the Nuggets and son of longtime NBA coach Rick Adelman. "I don't think the NFL is any different. I mean, it's hard to be a defensive back these days. That's probably the hardest job in sports, maybe."

"So I don't see (the NBA) changing it. My son is 9 years old and he loves watching the NBA because we're scoring 130 points. That's just the way it is."

Given rule enforcements designed to allow more freedom of moment in both the post and on the perimeter, it's only natural to expect free throws to be on the rise. There have been an average of 23.8 attempts at the line (through Sunday) this season, which is on pace to be the highest since 2010-11 (24.4).

"Generally, when you look

at some of these really, really, explosive individual performances where guys have put up huge numbers, I think you can immediately look at the free-throw line. There's always a correlation," Chicago coach Billy Donovan explained. "The free throw and the fouling has become a real challenge, because the minute you get your hands on people, those elite scorers know how to manipulate and draw fouls."

The league has tried to minimize that, at least when it comes to shooters looking to draw contact on flailed 3-pointers. But the NBA knows any rule change or shift always gets countered somehow by smart players, who just find another avenue to get to where they want.

"I remember people were saying, 'It's all about dunking and guys can't shoot.' Now it's, 'They shoot too well. It should be more of an inside game,'" Silver said. "We'll keep looking at it."

2-time Australian champ Azarenka tops Pegula, talks anxiety



MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—On the court at Rod Laver Arena on Tuesday night, Victoria Azarenka — the athlete — displayed the same confident brand of take-the-ball-early, hard-hitting tennis that carried her to two Australian Open titles and the No. 1 ranking a decade ago.

That was responsible, in part, for the way she beat No. 3 seed Jessica Pegula 6-4, 6-1 to return to the semifinals at Melbourne Park for the first time since those triumphs in 2012 and 2013.

After the match, Victoria Azarenka—the person—opened up about how, away from the court in recent months, she managed to learn a new mindset by, in her words, “Trying to be neutral, not to go negative; accepting the anxiety that I have; accepting the fear that I have.”

And that, too, she explained, allowed her to deal with a fear of failure and play once again to the very best of her considerable abilities, which she certainly did against Pegula, who hadn’t dropped a set in the tournament and ceded only 18 games through four matches until Tuesday.

The two—her professional and personal lives—“are definitely connected,” Azarenka said.

“I don’t think that one goes without the other. I feel like a tennis court—probably for everybody, but for me, especially—triggers a lot of those fears, a lot of anxiety,” she continued. “It’s kind of like an open canvas. When everything comes there at a high-pressure moment, high-stress moment, weird emotions come on the court. Sometimes, like, ‘What ... are you thinking about on the court?’”

A key turning point, one that helped her realize she needed to confront what was bothering her, came when she broke a few rackets after a loss at a tournament in October.

“I don’t think you recognize it right away. I think it builds up until you hit kind of a pretty bad spot where nothing kind of makes sense. You feel kind of lost,” Azarenka said. “I was at the point where I couldn’t find anything that I feel good about myself. Not like even one sentence.”

The No. 24-seeded Azarenka’s semifinal opponent will be No. 22 Elena Rybakina, the reigning Wimbledon champion, who defeated 2017 French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko 6-2, 6-4.



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus waves after defeating Jessica Pegula of the U.S. in their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023.

Rybakina—who was born in Moscow but has represented Kazakhstan since 2018 because it offered to fund her tennis career—hit 11 aces to take her tournament-leading total to 35.

In men’s action, Karen Khachanov reached his first semifinal at Melbourne Park—and made his second consecutive trip to the final four at a Grand Slam tournament, following his run at the U.S. Open last September—when 22-year-old American Sebastian Korda stopped playing in the third set because of an injured right wrist while trailing 7-6 (5), 6-3, 3-0.

Khachanov will face No. 3 Stefanos Tsitsipas, a 6-3, 7-6 (2), 6-4 winner over Jiri Lehecka, for a berth in the men’s final. Tsitsipas, a finalist at the 2021 French Open, got to the semifinals in Melbourne for the fourth time by saving all eight break points he faced.

A three-time runner-up at the U.S. Open, most recently in 2020, Azarenka has always played most effectively on hard courts, and that showed again on this evening. She repeatedly got the better of lengthy exchanges of forehands and backhands; Pegula made eight of the match’s first 10 unforced errors.

After some misses, Pegula would sigh, roll her eyes, slump her shoulders. She often looked into the stands at her coach, Davis Witt, to

say something, including one exclamation about the ball speed: “It’s so ... slow!” “Just made it tough for

me to feel like I could really pressure her,” Pegula said. “Felt like she was pressuring me constantly.”

Pegula, a 28-year-old from New York, was playing in the quarterfinals in Melbourne for the third year in a row

but fell to 0-5 for her career at that stage in Grand Slam tournaments, with each loss in straight sets. Her parents own the NFL’s Buffalo Bills, and Pegula wore a patch on her skirt during matches with the No. 3, the jersey number of player Damar Hamlin, who collapsed on the field during a game on Jan. 2.

Her exit Tuesday leaves No. 5 Aryna Sabalenka as the lone top-20 woman still in the bracket. On Wednesday, Sabalenka will play unseeded Donna Vekic in the quarterfinals, while No. 30 Karolina Pliskova faces unseeded Magda Linette.

Now 33 and a mother—she walked into the stadium wearing a jersey from Paris Saint-Germain, the favorite soccer team of her son, Leo—Azarenka, who is from Belarus, delivered big shot after big shot, raced to a 3-0 lead in 12 minutes, and never really let Pegula, a good friend, into the match.

“Leo doesn’t really care so much that I’m playing here. ... Obviously, he is watching some matches, but he definitely wants his mom to be home,” Azarenka said. “So a few more days here, and I’ll be back.”

Might make the trip with a trophy in tow if she keeps playing like this.

Source: Bill O’Brien agrees to return as Patriots OC



FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — Bill O’Brien has agreed to return to the Patriots as their offensive coordinator, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal hasn’t been finalized.

O’Brien spent the past two seasons as offensive coordinator for the University of Alabama. Before that he was the head coach of the Houston Texans from 2014 to 2020, leading them to four playoff appearances before being fired in 2020 after an 0-4 start.

He also served as Penn State’s coach from 2012 and 2013. That followed a four-year stint as a Patriots assistant in which he coached receivers and quarterbacks before being promoted to offensive coordinator in 2011. That season New England finished ranked third in points and second in yards.

O’Brien becomes the first official offensive coordinator Patriots coach Bill Belichick has hired since Josh McDaniels left following the 2021 season to take the Las Vegas

Raiders coaching job.

Instead of replacing McDaniels this past season, Belichick got more involved in the offense’s operations. He also made Matt Patricia, an assistant with a long defensive pedigree, the Patriots’ primary offensive play-caller with assistance from quarterbacks coach Joe Judge.

The move was a failure, with second-year quarterback Mac Jones regressing during an underachieving season that saw the Patriots offense ranked in the bottom half of the league in points per game (17th) and last in the NFL in red zone touchdowns.

The only seasons the Patriots ranked worse in scoring was 2020 (27th) with Cam Newton at quarterback and during Belichick’s first season in 2000 (25th).

This season ended with New England finishing 8-9 and missing the playoffs — their second sub-.500 campaign in two seasons and just the third under Belichick.

That same day, team owner Robert Kraft sent a letter to season ticket holders promising “critical evaluations of all elements of our football operation.”

The usually tight-lipped Pa-

trials also announced the following week that they would be bringing in candidates to interview for coordinator, along with seeking a long-term extension with coveted defensive coach Jerod Mayo.

In addition to O’Brien, the Patriots also interviewed their tight ends coach Nick Caley, Arizona Cardinals associate head coach Shawn Jefferson, University of Oregon offensive line coach Adrian Klemm and Minnesota Vikings receivers coach Keenan McCardell.

Klemm, Jefferson and McCardell played on teams coached by Belichick. Klemm was on the Patriots from 2000 to 2004, McCardell played on Belichick’s teams in Cleveland from 1992 to 1995 and Jefferson was in New England in the mid-to-late 1990s when Belichick was an assistant coach in Foxborough in 1996.

The Patriots’ offensive struggles this season played out publicly at times and featured two expletive-laced tirades by Jones. In one instance Jones was captured by TV cameras on the sideline bemoaning the approach to the passing game. In another he showed frustration on the

field over the pace (or lack thereof) in which plays were being relayed to him.

While Jones downplayed his frustrations in his interactions with reporters, he did hint at a desire to open up the playbook and for the coaching staff to take more chances. He also noted a wish to be coached more aggressively.

In the hiring of O’Brien that wish may soon be realized.

O’Brien is known for an at times intense style and was given the name “tea-pot” by Patriots players for his tendency to let his temper boil over.

It played out when he famously clashed with former Patriots quarterback Tom Brady on the sideline after Brady threw an interception during New England’s win over Washington in 2011.

In a radio interview in 2017 Brady called it emblematic of O’Brien’s passion to succeed.

“That’s Billy’s style,” Brady said. “Billy’s gonna let you know if he doesn’t like something that you did. He handles it in the right way, in a way that you really respected. You know he’s fiery, you know he just wants to get the job done.”

Pickleball group donates to Isla Montessori Saipan



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Pickleball Federation of the Northern Mariana Islands including Don Dunlop, back, second from right, Dr. Nelson Krum, Donna Krum, Nicky Nichols, Marivic Dunlop, and Rowena Houck donated pickleball equipment to Isla Montessori Saipan and striped a pickleball court at the Dan Dan Homestead Children's Park last Wednesday.

By **LEIGH GASES**
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



The Pickleball Federation of the Northern Mariana Islands and Paradise Dental Spa brought pickleball to young children after their donation of pickleball equipment to the Isla Montessori Saipan last Wednesday at the newly minted pickleball court in the Dan Dan Homestead Children's Park near the school.

Present on the first day of lessons, striping of the basketball court into a pickle-

ball court, and donation of a net, four paddles, and balls, were PFNMI board members, which include president Dr. Nelson Krum, members Donna Krum, Donn Dunlop, Nicky Nichols, Marivic Dunlop, and Isla Montessori Saipan principal Tatiana Ilmova, elementary teacher Kim Morgan, and their students aged 6 to 11.

Dr. Krum said that introducing pickleball to young children is easy enough as just in their second day of lessons, they are learning quickly and that two of them are almost ready to start

hitting from the baseline.

He also looks forward to hopefully getting some pickleball players on Saipan to play in the 2032 Olympics when pickleball will hopefully be introduced as an Olympic sport. "We want to develop Saipan to hopefully have a player in the Olympics in 2032. And it'll be a new enough sport that even kids from Saipan who don't consider themselves as Olympic material can play with the kids from the rest of the world and compete. It's going to be a fun program and the youth are new blood."

Kim Morgan, who arrived on

Yebin Shin ruled the girls 18 after disposing of Seiyul Homg in the finals, 6-4, 6-2.

Anne Lee topped the girls 14 after going 2-0 against Hoo Wang and Hanna Chae.

Chae returned the favor against Lee in the girls 12 as she beat her and Stella Choi

to win the division.

In the girls 12, Vivian Chung got the better of Jenna Pascual, 6-3, 6-2.

The Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association helped coordinate the 2023 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament.



MARK RABAGO
David Kwon in action in the mixed doubles 5.0 of the 2023 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last Sunday at the American Memorial Park.

of the two.

The elder Rangamar also thanked Saipan Vegas, who not only sponsored Dandan in the women's division and the boys 18 champion Koblerville but also San Vicente and Chalan Kiya in the boys 18 and third place Oleai in the U13.

"They put up a lot of money for all our five teams and

we can't appreciate them enough," he said.

Dandan 46 – Co. Camacho 16, Labausa 10, Ca. Camacho 6, Rangamar 6, Deleon Guerrero 4, Ramarui 4.

Garapan 33 – Flores 8, Lumabi 7, Garon 6, Alegre 4, Lopez 4, Villagomez 1.

Scoring by halves: 24-17, 46-33.



LEIGH GASES

Isla Montessori Saipan children are seen playing pickleball with Pickleball Federation of the Northern Mariana Islands Dr. Nelson Krum, second left, and teacher Kim Morgan on the newly striped pickleball court at the Dan Dan Homestead Children's Park yesterday morning.

Saipan last June, said that she is grateful for the introduction of pickleball to the students. She said they practice on their own in the mornings before class and get lessons from the PFNMI on Wednesdays. "Every day, the children are allowed to go out and practice their skills of hitting the ball against the wall, and practice forehand and backhand bouncing."

She added, "I love pickleball and the pickleball program for the children. They collaborate, they're moving, they're working on gross motor skills, balance. It energizes them before the work day. And it's just a great program. I just want to thank the coaches for coming out, helping, and contributing the equipment and their time. We are so grateful to them."

In yesterday morning's continuation of lessons, the children were excited once again to learn and play the sport.

Alesa Ilmova, a 9-year-old, said that she liked pickleball right away. "I like pickleball because it's very energizing. It's a sport that really fits me because I like moving a lot... talking to a lot of people, and that's

what I like."

Sam Pangelinan, a 10-year-old, said that he likes pickleball because it's easier than tennis. "It's a very fun sport, unlike tennis which is harder. For tennis, you may need to learn for two years to be really good at it but for pickleball, you can just master it in two weeks. Pickleball is a very easy sport. If you're trying to find something that's easy

to master, easy to do, and fun to do, pickleball is the thing."

Dasha Shatskova and Sebastian Banes, both 6-year-olds, also said that they like pickleball because it's fun.

Last November, PFNMI successfully introduced pickleball to Hopwood Middle School with the help of PE teacher and pickleball player Chang Whan Jang.



LEIGH GASES

Isla Montessori Saipan children were taught pickleball lessons yesterday at the Dan Dan Homestead Children's Park. Back from left: Isla Montessori School teacher Kim Morgan, Sam Pangelinan, Dr. Nelson Krum, Alesa Ilmova, Nicky Nichols. Front from left: Honey Thomsen, Dasha Shatskova, Sebastian Banes, Sammy McPhetres, and Roque Camacho, along with their class dog.

SERIN

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In playing and coordinating the 2023 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament at the same time, Chung admitted it was like a juggling act.

"It was very hard but in the end, it was definitely worth it."

In junior play that only concluded last weekend due to rain the previous weekend, David Kwon won the boys 18 after handily beating Wataru Kadokura, 6-1, 6-1, in the championship.

In the boys 16, Nason Wessel took the cake following a 6-2, 6-4 triumph in the finals against June Yu.

Wessel also prevailed in the boys 14 after taking home the championship by beating Siwoo Lee, 6-3, 6-2.

In the boys 12, Ryan Choi took the crown with a 6-0, 6-1 victory over Jinho Park.

DANDAN

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the slack.

"We had the veteran players as they helped us out. Kina also stepped up in crucial moments. Lia got hurt and she responded and that kinda accelerated her improvement," said the father

LEOWELL

From Page 20

322. The score is obtained by multiplying the lifter's snatch and clean & jerk total by a coefficient which is based on body weight.

Cristobal said his previous bests were 96 kg in the snatch and 127 kg in the clean & jerk.

He never stopped training after the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 last June and said "I've been training for this event since August."

The now Panama City, Florida resident then gave kudos to his brother, Leonardo, for helping him out during the competition, "so huge thanks to him." He also gives a happy advance birthday to his mother, Ana Marie Cristobal.

Along with his accomplishments in the competition, Cristobal has completed his USA Weightlifting, or USAW Level 2 certification.

"One of my goals is to be-

come a USAW-nationally certified coach and getting my Level 2 was a step toward that. Going through the course has helped me as an athlete and future coach to better understand aspects of weightlifting, from programming to technique," he said.

As for the chance to represent the CNMI in weightlifting once again, he said "If given the opportunity, I'll be ready for the [Micronesian] Games and Pacific Games when the time comes."

The 10th Micronesian Games will be held in July 2023 in Majuro, Marshall Islands, while the 2023 Pacific Games will be held in Honiara, Solomon Islands between Nov. 9 and Dec. 2, 2023.

In the Mini Games last June, Cristobal handed the CNMI its first silver medal of the games after lifting 125 kg in the clean & jerk.

He didn't stop there as right after, he won two silver medals in the U.S. Weightlifting U25 Nationals in Las Vegas, Nevada last July. His

best lift was 126 kg in the clean & jerk.

Then, the medals kept coming for Cristobal as he topped his weight group in the Buccaneer Barbell Bash weightlifting meet in Florida last October. He bagged the gold medal in the 67-kg division after totaling 223 kg. He lifted 96 kg in the snatch and 127 kg in the clean & jerk.

Cristobal enlisted in the U.S. Air Force for two years before he got accepted into the Air Force Academy in 2018. It was at the academy where he started a weightlifting club. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy on May 25, 2022, with a bachelor of science degree in Behavioral Sciences. He entered the Air Force as a commissioned officer and second lieutenant.

Aside from weightlifting, Cristobal also shines in his military career, having received the top former regular enlisted graduate award, and the Horner Award with the highest class honors.



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Pickleball group
donates to Isla
Montessori Saipan
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20 THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Serin Chung wins women's open tiara

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

After what seemed like eternity, Serin Chung finally beat Hye Jin Elliot and in the process topped the women's division of the 2023 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last weekend at the American Memorial Park.

In the compass draw format, Chung went 2-0 by beating Elliot (1-1) and Hoo Wang (0-2) to rule the women's open.

Chung drew Elliot first and surprised the No. 1 seed, 7-5, 6-2. She then let her guard down a bit before finishing the job when she overcame Wang, 6-4, 1-6, 10-1. Elliot took the unfamiliar runner-up finish after defeating Wang, 6-2, 6-2.

Chung, an 11th grade student at Saipan International School, said beating Elliot

was a breakthrough moment for her.

"It felt great since I can't even remember the last time I beat her. I tried to play confidently and tried to stay calm during the match."

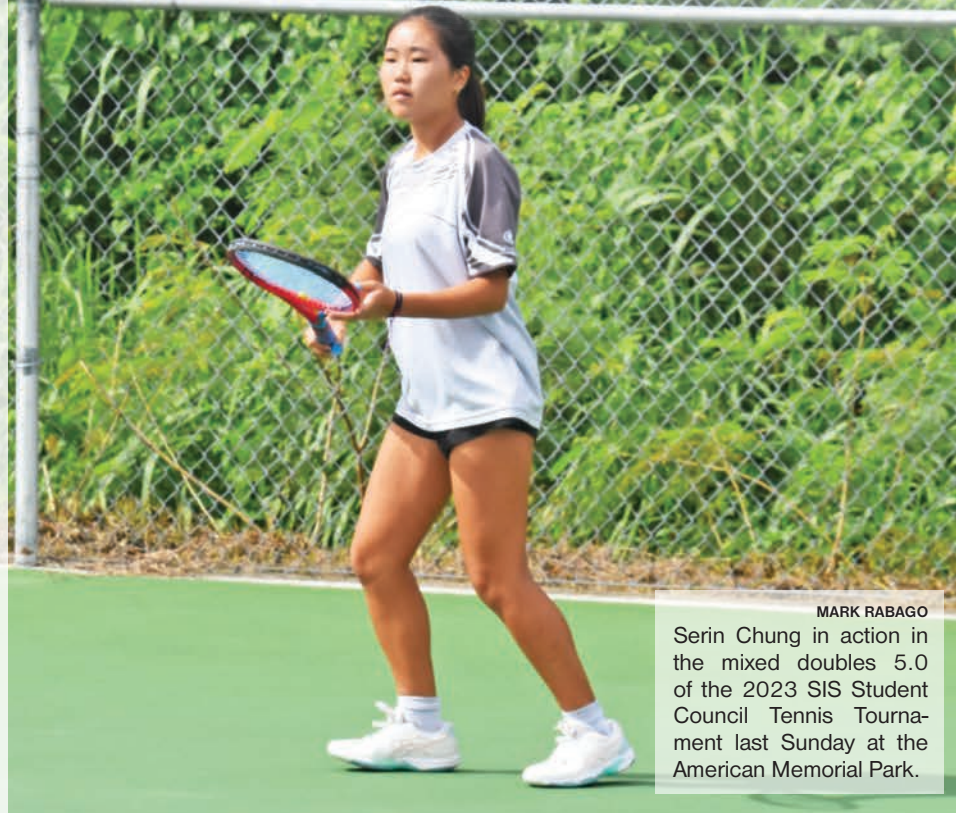
She did admit that she relaxed a bit in her match against Woo and it almost cost her.

"Yes Hoo's match was longer but I also feel like since

I have played more matches against Hye Jin, I feel really comfortable playing against her and I am able to play with more confidence," she said.

The 16-year-old dedicated her victory in the women's open to her parents, "since they always come to watch my matches when they can and they are always very supportive."

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MARK RABAGO
Serin Chung in action in the mixed doubles 5.0 of the 2023 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last Sunday at the American Memorial Park.

Leowell wins gold, breaks PBs in Miami tournament



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Leowell Cristobal attempts a clean & jerk lift during the Miami Classic Weightlifting Competition in Bayfront Park, Miami, Florida. He won gold in the 67-kg division and broke his personal bests in both the snatch and clean & jerk lifts.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Airman Leowell Cristobal continues to make light work of heavy implements as he struck gold along with breaking his personal bests in the Miami Classic Weightlifting Competition in conjunction with Wodapalooza last Jan. 15 in Bayfront Park, Miami, Florida.

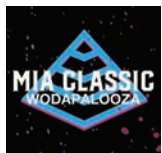
In the 67-kg weight class, the 24-year-old completed

all three snatch lifts successfully, from 93 kg, 98 kg, then his now personal best of 102 kg.

In the clean & jerk portion, Cristobal lifted his personal best of 134 kg in his second attempt, successfully lifted 127 kg in the first attempt, and missed 140 kg in his third and last attempt.

His total weight lifted was a whopping 236 kg and had the highest sinclair score of

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Dandan defies odds to top women's division

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dandan bucked the loss of a key player and justified its top seeding after running away with the women's division championship of the 2022 Marianas Village Pride Basketball League last Sunday night at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Center.

The Greg Iginoef-coached squad beat Garapan, 46-33, and successfully overcame the loss to injury of point guard and national team mainstay Liamwar Rangamar.

With Connie Camacho turning back the hands of time with 10 first-half points, Dandan opened a 24-17 lead. The rest of the

team then would assist their fearless leader in both offense and defense in the second half en route to the 13-point rout.

Camacho led all scorers with 16 points, while Antonette Labausa did most of her heavy lifting in the second half and wound up with 10 markers.

Garapan was paced by the 8

points of Quina Flores, while Dandan's stout defense limited Marlene Lumabi to just 7 points.

Team manager Elias Rangamar said Dandan's veteran-laden lineup tilted the balance in their favor in the finals matchup against Garapan.

"Connie is just amazing. It actually benefited us that the rain postponed the finals as it allowed her to recover from her injuries. She's no spring chicken anymore and her knees need more time to rest," he said of the prized many-time national player.

Rangamar also said that Labausa, who won a couple of silver medals in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 last June, also provided a spark for the team and in general the girls moved the ball around pretty well.

"Antonette also helped a great deal especially with her penetrating skills. Connie is more of a spot-up shooter at this stage of her career."

It was also pretty handy that when one Rangamar was out due to an injury another Rangamar was there to fill in

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Dandan team of the women's division team poses with Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation and Tan Siu Lin Foundation officials after winning the championship of the 2022 Marianas Village Pride Basketball League last Sunday night at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Center.